PATTERNS OF POWER · CARTHAGE

Carthage

The Complete Study · c. 814 — 241 — 146 BC · a Tyrian anchorage that paid an annual rent for the ground it stood on, became the richest state in the western sea, and was erased in three years by a vote taken in another country

Thomas J. Bryan

with Claude (Anthropic) · 2026

held as tested, not revealed

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PREFACE AND OUTLINE

Front matter · how this study was made, the discipline it holds to, and a map of its thirteen parts

The collaboration

This is a case study in the Patterns of Power series, applying the series' framework to the Carthaginian order — from a Tyrian landing on the Gulf of Tunis somewhere between about 835 and 750 BC to the destruction of the city by a Roman army in 146. The framework is a lens for reading how any order of power is founded, dressed and held: the floor of organised violence beneath every order, the robe of managed belief laid over the floor to make the force cheap, the settlement that divides the spoils among the armed, the formation that installs the belief in the child before he can refuse it, the cost column in which each ordinary person prices compliance, the default by which an elite defends the whole arrangement by defending each of its own positions, and — running through all of it — position logic, the proposition that men in like positions converge on like solutions because a position poses a problem with only a few good answers.

Carthage was chosen because it inverts the collection's colonial cases at almost every point while confirming their architecture, and because it offers one thing no other case in the corpus does: an order that arrived not by conquest but under a lease, paying an annual rent to the people whose ground it occupied, and spent five centuries converting a rent it paid into a tribute it received. It is also the corpus's cleanest test of a proposition the other cases can only approach — that the internal decency of a settlement may be a function of how completely it has externalised its costs.

The study was built the way the series is built, one module at a time. The author brought the framework, the direction and the judgement of the whole, and held the collaboration to its disciplines; Claude, Anthropic's model, did the research — verifying every load-bearing quotation, date and figure by web search against a source reproducing the primary text before any module was written — and produced the drafts, each presented and confirmed before the next was begun. The framework's concepts are the series'; the Carthaginian application, and the refinements it yielded, are the work of the collaboration. Its spine was corrected once, early and decisively: the seed written for this study assumed a native order that could be read as a naturalised former conquest with an apex to seize, and the evidence returned the opposite — a

Libyan world that had never gathered its coordination into a throne at all, and Numidian kingships that appear in the record four centuries after the founding, downstream of Carthage rather than prior to it. That correction, made in the landscape, is carried through to the last module.

The discipline

Public-domain primary sources — treaties, inscriptions, sacrificial tariffs, votive formulae, laws and the speeches and documents the ancient historians preserve — are quoted exactly, at the length the argument needs, because in a legal fiction the precise wording is the evidence; modern copyrighted scholarship is paraphrased, briefly, and credited. No quotation, date, attribution or figure is invented or reconstructed from memory: what cannot be verified is dropped or flagged, and contested figures are given as ranges. One tradition that would have served this study well — the reported Carthaginian law forbidding citizens to learn Greek letters — was dropped for exactly that reason and the omission recorded where it falls.

The evidentiary problem here is more severe than in any other case in the collection and shapes every page of it. The Carthaginian archive was destroyed in 146; the libraries were given away to the Numidian kings and lost; almost every literary witness is Greek or Roman, hostile, and frequently writing centuries after the events. The study's answer is not to discount the hostile sources but to read them for what they concede against their own interest, and to lean where possible on what the Carthaginians themselves wrote in stone. Aristotle, who admired the constitution, supplies the purchase of offices. Polybius, who wanted to prove Rome's superiority, supplies the fact that the largest element in Carthaginian armies was conscripted rather than hired. Livy, sympathetic to Hannibal, supplies the sentence establishing that Carthaginian citizens paid no direct tax. Where a claim rests on a single late or hostile witness, that is said in the body rather than kept to a note.

The engine throughout is the method of information asymmetry — the exact public words set beside the exact words of the ground, the arithmetic laid out and the sum left to the reader. Suffering is held with gravity, and the study refuses both flattery and demonisation, naming the legal fiction as fiction and explaining the order's logic without excusing it; its watchword is *legibility is not pardon*. Every module returns a refinement to the framework, stated plainly in its closing section. And the pattern is held as tested, not revealed — a lens laid over the record, a tendency and never a law.

What this study added to the framework

Because Carthage inverts the colonial shape while keeping the architecture, it could name features the colonial cases could not. Chief among them: that the settlement's fictions — vacancy, recognition, divisibility — are functions of a divided audience, so that where takers and auditors are the same men no fiction is generated and the silence of a record measures the absence of a constraint rather than the gentleness of a taking; that the recursion of conquered orders has a floor, since some grounds carry no prior apex to seize, and that a newcomer meeting one may end by manufacturing a chair next door and losing to it; that a metropole can supply a robe and be structurally incapable of supplying a floor; that a robe may be *contractual*, reading failure as arrears rather than as refutation or insufficient faith, and that a priced substitution written into its liturgy is evidence the obligation was believed rather than performed; that formation withheld does not leave a blank but leaks, producing where admission is refused and contact is not a counter-elite fluent in the ruler's own idiom and bound to him by nothing; that where formation is withheld the community enforcer does not go missing but reverses; that for an unformed and unbenefited subject population the binding constraint is coordination cost rather than deterrence; that a default fails at whichever node the arrangement prices below its outside option, and that the instruments used to police such a node are part of what mispriced it; that relocation to a frontier is a third response alongside desertion and coup, and produces the state's largest external adventures; that clients are rented nodes and can always be outbid; that plurality is not contestability where the plural institutions recruit from one class; that a frontier substitutes for a repricing and will be preferred, so that exhaustion produces widening only where the elite needs the excluded population's bodies; and that the metabolic note is called by the destruction of coordination rather than of rulers, so that its size is set by what the conqueror wants the ground for the following spring.

The arc

A landscape opening and twelve modules, each with a framework function and its own evocative title.

Landscape — the two worlds on the eve. An Annual Tribute for the Ground. A Libyan order that had never pooled its coordination into a throne, and a tributary Levantine city that could export institutions but never an army, meeting over a lease.

1 — The Floor of Force. Not to Overthrow, but to Recover. Two centuries with no army in the record, a floor built in the sixth century in order to stop paying rent,

raised out of subject levies and hired specialists, and pointed thereafter as much at its own commanders as at anyone else.

2 — The Settlement. The Country Houses, One After Another. Private estates on ground taken by war, a transmission rule of money rather than blood, and an instrument of conveyance that has left no paper at all — because nobody had to be persuaded.

3 — The Robe. Because He Heard His Voice. A contractual religion of vows discharged and tithes remitted, cut for citizens, kinsmen and gods and never once offered to the conquered.

4 — Formation. Two Scripts on One Stone. A citizen formed by his own name before he could refuse it; a subject formed by an order Carthage left standing and by Punic forms it never meant to lend — and the monument the man who buried Carthage was given in Carthage's own alphabet.

5 — The Cost Column. They Scattered to Their Native Lands. Three ledgers run separately — a citizen with water under his house, a townsman whose loyalty was repriced by a better patron, and a cultivator who had already decided the price of revolt was acceptable and simply could not stay assembled.

6 — Extraction. No Tax Falling on Individual Citizens. Four revenue streams and not one of them domestic, a collector class that financed itself, and the audit that proved the state solvent and finished the man who conducted it.

7 — Information and Suppression. They Kept the Voyage Hidden. No distant public to deceive, so the concealment ran sideways at commercial rivals — and an order that could protect a sailing direction to the death and had no instrument for testing a document it was handed.

8 — Elite Coordination and the Default. Some Desert Their Posts, Others Attempt to Become Tyrants. An arrangement that held every position in the hierarchy for four hundred years except the one holding the army, diagnosed as a structural failure by a Greek historian in the fourth century BC.

9 — Plurality or Foreclosure. Any One Who Likes May Oppose It. Real liberties, deposited by real factional quarrels, held by a class that never found a use for admitting anybody — and the difference between institutions that compete and institutions that contest.

10 — Change and Collapse. They Went on Rendering the Same Share. The largest rising in Carthaginian history changing nothing, two exhaustions producing no repricing because a frontier was available, and an end decided by a vote in another country.

11 — The Grim Accounting. Himera Was Never Rebuilt. Six centuries of an armed settlement's bill, the asymmetry of who forgot how the arrangement was made, and a conquest that produced almost no famine because the conqueror wanted the wheat.

12 — Convergence and Divergence. The Men They Never Needed. Where the order meets the pattern and where it stands apart, closing on the strongest case its defenders can make, answered without flinching: that the freedom and the water and the peace were real, and were the same fact as the quarter of the harvest.

AN ANNUAL TRIBUTE FOR THE GROUND

Landscape · the two worlds that met on the Gulf of Tunis — a Libyan order that had never gathered itself into a throne, and a tributary Levantine city that could export its institutions but never its army — set side by side before the first stone of Qart-hadasht was laid

Every other study in this collection opens on a landing party with a weapon. This one opens on a lease. The fullest surviving narrative of Carthage's foundation is Roman, late, and third-hand — Justin's epitome of Pompeius Trogus, condensing a lost Augustan history several centuries after the event — and it tells of a Tyrian princess in flight, a bargain for as much ground as an ox-hide would cover, and a hide cut into strips. That part is folklore of a well-travelled kind, and the name it explains, Byrsa, is best understood as a Greek pun (*byrsa*, ox-hide) laid over a Semitic word for citadel. But the clause that follows the folklore is not folkloric at all: *an inclination to detain the strangers was felt also by the Africans; and, accordingly, with the consent of all, Carthage was founded, an annual tribute being fixed for the ground which it was to occupy*.

A rent. Not a conquest, not a treaty of submission, not a grant from a defeated king — a recurring payment, in perpetuity, by the newcomers to the people who were already there, for the ground the newcomers stood on. And it is not a stray detail in a single passage, because Justin's later books treat the payment as a live item of Carthaginian politics for something close to two centuries. Under Mago's sons, in the middle sixth century, *a contest was also maintained against the Africans, who demanded tribute for many years for the ground on which the city stood*, and the epitomator's verdict on that war is the sort of thing a hostile tradition does not invent: *but as the cause of the Africans was the more just, their fortune was likewise superior, and the struggle with them was ended — not by exertions in the field — by the payment of a sum of money*. Carthage tried to stop paying, lost, and bought its way out. Only in the following generation does the record show the account closed, when under Mago's grandsons *war was made upon the Moors, a contest was maintained with the Numidians, and the Africans were compelled to remit the tribute paid for the building of the city*.

Hold that sequence in view, because it is the spine of everything the twelve modules will measure. The order under study began as a tenant and ended, in the third century,

taxing the descendants of its landlords at a reported half of their harvest. Between those two facts lie roughly five hundred years of men in positions, each solving the problem actually in front of him with the materials actually to hand — and each solution creating the conditions for the next problem. There is no Punic character in this account, no mercantile genius and no Semitic cruelty; there is a sequence of decisions, most of them the obvious decision from where the decider stood. The landscape's task is to establish where that first cohort stood, what they could see from there, and what they found waiting.

The city that could not send an army

The men who beached at the Gulf of Tunis came from Tyre, and the single most important thing about Tyre in the ninth and eighth centuries is that it was rich and it was not sovereign. It was an island city of two harbours off the Lebanese coast, living on purple dye, timber, the carrying trade and a metals network that reached to Cyprus and beyond; and from 868, when Ashurnasirpal II brought Assyrian arms to the Mediterranean, it lived also under a standing demand from the east. The Assyrian scribes recorded what that looked like from the collector's side: *the tribute of the sea coast — from the inhabitants of Tyre, Sidon, Byblos, Mahallata, Kaiza, Amurru and Arvad which is an island in the sea, consisting of gold, silver, tin, copper, copper-containers, linen garments with multi-coloured trimmings, large and small monkeys, ebony, boxwood, ivory from walrus tusk, a product of the sea — this their tribute I received and they embraced my feet*. Shalmaneser III took tribute from Tyre in turn, and the bronze gates of Balawat show the Tyrian king at the water's edge seeing the boats off. By the seventh century the arrangement had hardened into something franker still: Esarhaddon's treaty with Ba'al of Tyre bought the city its trading privileges at the price of admitting an Assyrian royal deputy, the *qēpu*, into its own bodies of political decision — the king of Tyre not to open a letter from Assyria without the deputy present.

So the metropole of this study was a tributary. That is a structural fact and not a colourful one, because it settles in advance what Tyre could and could not give a daughter city. It could give institutions, and it did: the Phoenician template of a hereditary king flanked by a council of elders, with a priesthood beside him and the great merchant households behind, is the shape Carthage would run in for six centuries, and it was not invented on African soil. It could give a god, a language, an alphabet, a calendar and a name. It could give the technique of ironworking, and the archaeology at Carthage shows exactly that arriving with the settlers. What it could never give was a soldier. No Tyrian fleet was ever coming west to hold the Gulf of

Tunis; Tyre could not hold Tyre. Whatever floor of organised violence Carthage was going to stand on, Carthage was going to have to raise from the ground it stood on — and the whole of Module 1 is the consequence.

Why the Phoenicians went west at all remains genuinely open, and the honest position is to hold the two accounts side by side. Susan Frankenstein's influential argument of 1979 read the western expansion as a function of Neo-Assyrian imperialism: cities squeezed for tribute in silver went looking for silver at the far end of the sea. María Eugenia Aubet's synthesis puts the weight on the trade itself and on Tyre's own commercial logic, and recent lead-isotope work on silver hoards in the Phoenician homeland has pushed the first western prospecting a century or more earlier than the colonies, which sits awkwardly with a purely reactive model. Both may be partly right; the pressure and the opportunity are not exclusive. What matters here is the shape of the enterprise, which is not in dispute: these were not settler expeditions after land. They were anchorages and staging points on a long metals route, chosen for harbours and defensibility, and the Phoenician cities had neither the manpower nor the intention to plant Greek-style colonies of farmers. Carthage began as a link in a chain. That it became something else is the study's subject, and nobody standing on the beach in 800 had any reason to foresee it.

What the ground was, and which of its gifts nobody was looking at

The site was chosen by men reading a sea. It is a triangular peninsula in the middle of the Gulf of Tunis, hilly, with the open Mediterranean to the north and east, sheltered anchorage, and a low citadel hill — the Byrsa, under sixty metres — commanding both the water and the plain. To the south lies the shallow Lake of Tunis, to the north the sebkha, and the peninsula joins the mainland only by narrow necks that a small population can hold: the 1911 Britannica, reporting the ancient figures, gives Polybius' rough estimate of the isthmus at twenty-five stades and Strabo's circuit of the peninsula at three hundred and sixty. Above all it sits on the African shoulder of the Sicilian narrows, at the pinch-point where the eastern and western Mediterranean basins meet, with the winds and currents to Sicily reliable enough to be planned around. Every one of those affordances is a sailor's affordance, and every one of them is still doing work in 146, when the same necks and the same water make the city take three years to kill.

There was already a Tyrian foundation nearby. Utica stood at the mouth of the Bagradas, and its name — Punic *ʿtq*, cognate with the Semitic root for "old" — makes

the sequence legible in a way few foundation stories manage, because the new settlement called itself Qart-hadasht, New City, against the old one. The tradition dates Utica to 1101 and Carthage to 814; the archaeology supports neither figure and its own numbers have moved. Pottery-based chronology long put nothing at Carthage earlier than the last quarter of the eighth century, a full century after Timaeus' date, and Justin's own reckoning of seventy-two years before Rome would put it earlier still, around 825. Radiocarbon work since the late 1990s has closed much of that gap and pushed the earliest material back toward 800 and possibly the late ninth century. The defensible statement is a range: a permanent Tyrian settlement at the site somewhere between roughly 835 and 750, with the traditional 814 no longer contradicted by the material but not confirmed by it either.

And then there is the gift the founders were not looking at. Behind the harbours lie the Cape Bon peninsula and the valley of the Bagradas — the deepest and best-watered arable in North Africa, the ground that would make Roman Africa a granary and that, long before Rome, would turn a chain of anchorages into a landed state with a subject peasantry. Nothing in the position of a Tyrian shipmaster in 800 required him to think about it. He was choosing a beach. The soil was a tide he had no occasion to know, and it would be his great-great-grandsons, facing a problem he never had, who discovered they were standing on it.

The order that had no chair in it

The framework this collection runs on carries a standing instruction: a conqueror never meets an aboriginal or timeless order, only an earlier conquest so thoroughly naturalised that it has become the furniture of reality. The instruction has earned its keep repeatedly — the Islam that France met in Algeria was the seventh-century Arab conquest gone native over a millennium; the Confucian world France met in Vietnam was a Chinese import the Vietnamese had made authentically their own. Carthage is where the instruction has to be tested rather than applied, and the evidence bends it.

What the Tyrians found on the Tunisian plain was a Berber-speaking world of considerable antiquity, and — the point that matters — one that was not politically empty and not politically pooled. It was agricultural as well as pastoral: Herodotus, writing some three and a half centuries after the founding, marks the transition precisely, noting that *westward of the river Triton and next to the Ausees begins the country of Libyans who till the soil and possess houses*, against the low, sandy, nomad-held country to the east. These were people with fields, villages, herds, a language, a script that would later be written as Libyco-Berber, and their own dead in their own tombs. What they did not have, so far as any evidence reaches, was a state. No city, no king's

court, no tax register, no standing army, no office from which the whole plain could be commanded. Authority ran through lineage, locality, age and consent — cheap, durable, deeply believed, and distributed so that it never gathered anywhere a stranger could take hold of it.

The negative evidence is unusually clean, because we can watch the kingships appear later, and late. The Massylii of eastern Numidia, the confederation that would eventually produce Masinissa, are described in the scholarship as an amalgamation of smaller groupings formed in the fourth century; the first Libyan king who surfaces in a contemporary-facing narrative is Aylimas, whom Diodorus places against Agathocles in 310, more than four hundred and fifty years after the first Tyrian roof went up on the Byrsa. Justin's Hiarbas, "king of the Mauretanians", who demands Elissa in marriage and drives her onto the pyre, belongs to Roman literature and not to the eighth century; the Latin tradition needed a native monarch for the story to work, and supplied one.

This matters more than a chronological correction. The framework's sharpest early question of any conquest is whether the order on the ground had vested the power to make and unmake its own elite in an *office* — because an office can be entered by a stranger, and a lineage or a consensus cannot. In the Libyan plain there was no seat, and the recursion clause needs a floor put under it: not every ground carries a former conquest that reached the self-running pole and left an apex behind. Some orders never pooled their coordination at all, and a newcomer meeting one of those inherits nothing whatsoever — no tax machine, no command that binds, no man who can deliver a district. He must build his floor from scratch, forge his own intermediaries, and pay for both.

Two disciplines apply here at once and pull in opposite directions, so both must be stated. The first: this is not a deficiency. An order that runs on lineage and consent is not a failed state but a different and often cheaper answer, and the Libyans of the Bagradas had solved the problem of living together without needing to feed a court. The second, harder: naming the absence of a throne is not the same as saying nobody suffered a taking. A people without an apparatus is not thereby protected from dispossession; it is dispossessed without paperwork, and the Libyan cultivator who ended up rendering half his crop to a city on the coast reached that condition through no instrument that recorded his name.

And Carthage supplies something the corpus has not previously been able to watch: the chair being *built* by the pressure of the newcomer's presence. The Numidian kingships emerge over the fourth and third centuries in the space Carthage's demands, wars, subsidies and cavalry contracts created, alongside a Punic-influenced material and

political culture, and it was one of those manufactured kings who rode with the legions at Zama and whose grandsons watched the city burn. Carthage did not find a chair on the African plain. Over six centuries it made one, next door, and never once sat in it.

What was built first

The material record of the earliest city is thin and localised, but three things in it are worth holding, because each is a decision.

The settlers brought iron. Excavation at Bir Massouda, inside the later city, found an eighth-century cremation necropolis succeeded after the mid-seventh century by metalworking quarters, and the analysis of the slag and tuyères identifies primary smithing and forging of wrought iron and steel — the earliest ferrous metallurgy in North Africa, arriving as a Levantine technology in Levantine hands. They also brought walls: the casemate circuit on the city's southern edge is now dated to around the middle of the seventh century, within a century or so of the founding. A trading post that fortifies itself early is a trading post that expects to be attacked, and by whom is a question Module 1 will have to answer.

And they brought the tophet. From roughly 750 until the destruction, in nine descending strata across some six thousand square metres just north of the commercial harbour, the Carthaginians deposited urns — on the excavated estimates upwards of twenty thousand of them — containing the cremated remains of infants and young children, frequently together with those of lambs and kids, marked at first by stones and from the sixth century by inscribed stelae dedicated to Baal Hammon and Tanit. What exactly was happening there is the most contested question in the field: the literary sources are hostile and mostly late, the osteology and the epigraphy are read in opposite directions by serious scholars, and this study will not settle it in a landscape. It belongs to Module 3, where both credulity toward Rome's account and reflexive dismissal of it are failures of the same kind. What can be said here without prejudging any of it is structural and is not small. Within a generation or two of arrival, a small colonial population committed ground, labour, imported vessels and its own children's remains to a public precinct that it then maintained without interruption for six hundred years. Whatever else it was, it was expensive, it was collective, and it was there from almost the beginning.

The same is true of the payment that went the other way across the sea. Diodorus, explaining a Carthaginian panic in 310, describes an obligation that had been allowed to lapse: *since they had come as colonists from that city, it had been their custom in the earlier period to send to the god a tenth of all that was paid into the public revenue; but later, when they had acquired great wealth and were receiving more considerable*

revenues, they sent very little indeed, holding the divinity of little account. A tenth of public revenue, annually, to the temple of Melqart in Tyre — from a city that by the sixth century was incomparably the greater of the two, that took no orders from Tyre, and that could not have been compelled to send a shekel. When an apex already holds uncontested force and still pays a real and avoidable price, the payment is the evidence: some audience's recognition was worth buying. Which audience, and in what currency, is Module 3's problem. That the money moved is the landscape's fact.

Reading the landscape against the framework

The landscape sets the case up and returns two refinements to be carried forward, with a third held open as a thing to be traced rather than a claim to be banked.

The recursion has a floor, and the chair can be a by-product. The principle that a conqueror meets not an aboriginal order but an earlier conquest naturalised is confirmed everywhere it can be, and it cannot be confirmed here, because the Libyan world of the eighth century shows no prior conquest-state and no apex — no office, no court, no register, nothing to capture and nothing to rent. The refinement is to say plainly that the recursion bottoms out: there are orders whose coordination never curdled into a seizable position, and meeting one is a structurally different situation from meeting a naturalised empire, because the newcomer inherits neither an apparatus nor a warrant and must pay in force for what a chair would have given him free. Carthage then adds what no case in the corpus has yet supplied: six centuries in which the stateless neighbour *acquires* a chair, under the pressure of the newcomer's own demands, until the manufactured monarchy is strong enough to help destroy its maker. Where a colonial study asks what a conqueror found, this one will have to ask, repeatedly, what he was creating on the other side of his frontier while he was not looking.

A metropole can supply a robe and be structurally incapable of supplying a floor. The colonial studies in this collection all found the legitimating centre and the guaranteeing power fused in one place — the sea-lane ran both ways, and the metropole that cut the robe could also land the troops. Tyre could do the first and never the second. It was itself a tributary, its king's correspondence opened in the presence of an Assyrian deputy, and it exported a constitution, a god, an alphabet, an industry and a name to a daughter it could not defend and did not govern. The prediction to be tested downstream is exact: an order whose metropole gives it belief but no force must raise its floor locally, from a population it did not bring with it, and will therefore have to buy that floor or conscript it — which is the standing condition out of which the Mercenary War eventually arrives on schedule rather than by accident.

And the spine to be traced, not yet claimed. This study begins with an order paying rent for the ground it occupies and ends with that order taking a reported half of the crop from the descendants of its landlords. The settlement module of the framework asks what instrument converted what — a relation into a thing, an occupation into a vacancy. Here the conversion runs the other way and over an unusually long baseline: a rent paid became a tribute received, by a sequence of wars whose failures Justin lets us date as precisely as its successes. Nothing about that outcome was visible from the beach. It was reached by men solving the problem in front of them — an unpayable levy, a hostile neighbour, a harvest they had come to depend on — with what they had, one decision at a time, until the arithmetic of the position had been turned completely around. Legibility is not pardon, and the neighbours who granted the first lease are owed the record of what it became.

A note on sources. The exact quotations carrying weight here are public-domain primary material given as the standard translations reproduce it. Justin's *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus* 18.4–6 and 19.1–2 are quoted from John Selby Watson's translation — the foundation bargain and "an annual tribute being fixed for the ground which it was to occupy"; the sixth-century war in which "the cause of the Africans was the more just" and which ended by payment; and the later remission of "the tribute paid for the building of the city." Justin is an epitomator of an epitomator, Roman, writing plausibly in the second or third century CE about events of the ninth to fifth centuries BCE, and the ox-hide, the omens of the ox's and horse's heads, the suicide on the pyre and King Hiarbas are literary furniture that should not be treated as evidence; the tribute is quoted and used here because it recurs as an ordinary political fact across three separate passages rather than as a set-piece. Diodorus Siculus 20.14.2 on the tenth of public revenue sent to Tyre is quoted from the Loeb translation as reproduced at LacusCurtius, and is a single late witness writing about a lapse rather than about the custom. Herodotus 4.190–191 on the Libyan cultivators west of the Triton is quoted from the Loeb text; he wrote around the middle of the fifth century and describes his own day, not the eighth. The Assyrian tribute list of Ashurnasirpal II is quoted as translated in the standard collection (ANET 276). The Esarhaddon treaty with Ba'al of Tyre (ANET 533–534, SAA 2 5), the Balawat gate reliefs, and the Assyrian resident's presence in Tyrian decision-making are paraphrased from the Assyriological literature and the Oracc project's summaries. Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited: Aubet and Frankenstein on the motives of the westward expansion, with the recent lead-isotope work on Phoenician silver hoards noted as complicating a purely reactive model; Docter, Chelbi, Maraoui Telmini, Kaufman and colleagues on the Bir Massouda excavations, the eighth-century necropolis, the mid-

seventh-century casemate wall and the earliest North African ferrous metallurgy; Stager, Wolff and the subsequent literature on the tophet's stratigraphy and extent; Camps and the Numidian scholarship on Libyan social organisation and the late emergence of the kingships. Contested figures are given as ranges and attributed. The foundation date is given as a range of roughly 835–750 rather than as 814/813, since Timaeus' date, Justin's implied 825, the pottery chronology's last quarter of the eighth century and the radiocarbon results do not agree, and the disagreement is itself informative; the topographic measurements attributed to Polybius and Strabo are reported as the 1911 Britannica gives them; the report that Libyans rendered half their crops during the First Punic War is Polybius' and is flagged here only as the arc's end-point, to be examined where it belongs. Where a claim rests on a single late or hostile witness, that has been said in the body of the text rather than kept to this note, because for this case it will be true of most of them.

NOT TO OVERTHROW, BUT TO RECOVER

Module 1 · the floor of force — a trading city that had no army for two centuries, built one in order to stop paying rent, raised it out of other men's bodies, and spent the four hundred years that followed managing the fact that it could be turned around

The framework this collection runs on begins every order with a founding act of violence and lays the belief over it afterwards, because that is what the record almost always shows. Carthage does not show it. For roughly the first two centuries of the settlement's existence there is no Carthaginian army anywhere in the evidence — no campaign, no conquest, no muster, no general. There is a rent being paid to the neighbours for the ground, a cemetery, an ironworking quarter, a precinct of urns, and a growing volume of pottery from every shore of the sea. The floor is missing, and its absence is not a gap in the sources so much as a fact about the position: a chain of anchorages on a metals route does not need one, and the men who founded this one had come from a city that could not have supplied it.

Then, in the middle of the sixth century, the record acquires generals all at once, and the tradition is emphatic that this was an invention rather than an inheritance. Justin, epitomising a lost Augustan history, opens his nineteenth book with a sentence that reads like a foundation charter for the Punic state: *Mago, the general of the Carthaginians, after having been the first, by regulating their military discipline, to lay the foundations of the Punic power, and after establishing the strength of the state, not less by his skill in the art of war than by his personal prowess, died, leaving behind him two sons, Hasdrubal and Hamilcar*. Whatever Mago actually did — and a single late epitomator attributing a whole military system to one man is exactly the kind of claim this study should treat with suspicion — the shape of the memory is itself the datum. The Carthaginians, or the Greek informants through whom we hear them, did not remember their army as something they had always had. They remembered it as a thing somebody organised, at a date, for a reason.

The reason is legible from the position. By the middle of the sixth century a Carthaginian magnate faced a set of problems his great-great-grandfather had not: Greek settlement pressing into the western basin, contested water off Sardinia and Corsica, Phoenician towns along the African coast looking to Carthage rather than to a

Tyre now inside the Babylonian and then the Persian orbit — and, closer than any of these, a standing annual payment to Libyan landlords for the ground the city stood on. The first sustained use to which the new instrument was put is recorded in the very next lines of the same passage. Under Mago's sons, *war was made upon Sardinia; and a contest was also maintained against the Africans, who demanded tribute for many years for the ground on which the city stood* — and that first war was lost. *But as the cause of the Africans was the more just, their fortune was likewise superior, and the struggle with them was ended - not by exertions in the field - by the payment of a sum of money.* A generation later the account was closed by force: under the grandsons, *war was made upon the Moors, a contest was maintained with the Numidians, and the Africans were compelled to remit the tribute paid for the building of the city*, an event conventionally placed somewhere in the first half of the fifth century.

That is the sequence, and it should be held exactly, because it reverses the framework's usual order. Carthage did not begin with a floor and add a settlement. It began with a settlement — a rented site, a functioning trade, a temple — and built a floor when, and because, it decided to keep land it had been paying for. The instrument was created to cancel a debt.

What the floor was made of

Once it exists, the composition of that floor is the most consequential fact in the study, and it is also the place where the surviving sources most need to be read against their own grain.

The famous statement is Polybius', writing in the second century for a Greek readership he wanted to persuade of Rome's superiority. Comparing the two constitutions, he grants Carthage the sea and takes away the land: *they indeed devote their whole energies to this matter, whereas the Carthaginians entirely neglect their infantry, though they do pay some slight attention to their cavalry. The reason of this is that the troops they employ are foreign and mercenary, whereas those of the Romans are natives of the soil and citizens.* The judgement has been quoted for two thousand years, and the phrase *foreign and mercenary* has done more to shape the picture of Carthage than any other four words in the record.

It is not false, and it is not honest either. Polybius' own narrative supplies the correction. When he comes to describe the army that mutinied in 241 — the same army that had just fought Rome for twenty-three years — he lists Iberians, Celts, Ligurians, men from the Balearics and a body of mixed Greeks who were mostly deserters and slaves, and then says that the largest portion of all consisted of Libyans. Those Libyans were not hired. They came from the subject communities of the

African hinterland, which owed Carthage both tribute and men, and the obligation to serve was one of the terms of their subjection rather than a contract they had entered. Calling the whole force mercenary buries the largest part of it inside a word that means the opposite of what was happening to those particular men, and the burial was rhetorically useful, because a Rome whose strength lay in citizen levies looks better against a rival who buys his soldiers than against one who conscripts them exactly as Rome conscripted its own Italians.

So the floor had three layers, and they should be kept distinct because they behaved differently. There was a thin citizen apex, supplying officers, the elite formation the Greek sources call the Sacred Band, and — in emergencies only — a general levy of the city. There was a broad conscripted base drawn from the Libyan and Libyphoenician communities of the hinterland, which by the fourth century was the largest single element in every field army. And there was a purchased professional stratum recruited abroad by standing agents: Iberian swordsmen, Celtic and Ligurian infantry, Balearic slingers, Greek specialists, and above all the Numidian light horse that was the best cavalry in the western Mediterranean and was never Carthaginian at all. Only the third layer is mercenary in the strict sense. The whole apparatus was commanded by Carthaginians, organised by nation rather than standardised, and — from the third century, after the shock of Pyrrhus — supplemented by the elephants that had become the standard Hellenistic answer to a shield wall.

The citizen layer is visible chiefly at the moments it was destroyed. Diodorus, describing the rout of a Carthaginian army by Timoleon at the river Crimissus in 341 or 339, records that *even the Carthaginians who composed the Sacred Band, twenty-five hundred in number and drawn from the ranks of those citizens who were distinguished for valour and reputation as well as for wealth, were all cut down after a gallant struggle*. A body of the same kind appears again against Agathocles outside Tunis in 310 and is destroyed again, and after that date Carthaginian citizens serving abroad effectively vanish from the record until the emergencies of the Punic wars. It should be said in the body of the text and not in a note that the Sacred Band rests on Diodorus almost alone, that its very name mirrors the Theban unit annihilated at Chaeronea, and that at least some scholars read it as a Greek literary construct laid over what was simply a citizen core. The underlying fact survives the doubt: there were citizens in the line in the fourth century, they were killed in large numbers twice within thirty years, and afterwards there were not.

The lesson a Carthaginian magnate could draw from those two afternoons is not obscure, and it is the lesson he drew. A city of merchants that puts its own propertied men in a phalanx can lose its coordinating class in a single day to a Greek adventurer

with better ground. Buying Iberians is not cowardice; from that position it is arithmetic.

An order that could buy what it did not possess

The advantage of a purchased floor shows most clearly in 255, and the episode is worth setting out because it is the cleanest illustration in the corpus of what money can and cannot acquire.

Regulus had landed in Africa, beaten the Carthaginians twice, taken Tunis, and offered terms so harsh that the envoys could not bear to hear them out. Into this arrived, with a batch of recruits shipped from Greece by Carthage's own recruiting officers, *a certain Xanthippus of Lacedemon, a man who had been brought up in the Spartan discipline, and had had a fair amount of military experience*. He observed to friends that Carthage had been beaten not by the Romans but by its own generals' inexperience; the remark reached the government; the government summoned him, listened, and handed him the army. He put the elephants in a single line in front, the phalanx behind them at a distance, the best of the light troops with the cavalry on the wings — and destroyed a consular army so completely that of some fifteen thousand Romans about two thousand escaped and the consul himself was taken. Then, Polybius says, he sailed home, *and this was a very prudent and sensible decision on his part; for brilliant and exceptional achievements are wont to breed the deepest jealousy and most bitter slander*.

Hold both halves. An order that hires its expertise can hire, at short notice and on the strength of a rumour, an answer it does not itself contain — which is a genuine and underrated capability, and one a citizen militia does not have. And it cannot keep what it hires: the man who saved the state had no position in it, and knew that having none was the only reason he was safe.

The other floor

There is one instrument Carthage did not outsource, and the contrast is sharp enough to be worth stating as a structure rather than an observation.

Polybius, who thought the Carthaginian infantry beneath notice, thought the fleet the best in the sea, and his account of Drepana in 249 explains why in technical terms: the Punic ships were faster, better built and better rowed, able to develop their line in open water, break through and come round on an enemy's flank or stern, and withdraw safely when pressed — manoeuvres the Roman crews could not execute. Behind that fleet stood the artificial harbours on the city's southern shore, a rectangular

commercial basin opening into a circular naval one with an island at its centre. Appian, drawing on a lost portion of Polybius, describes shipyards *which had capacity for 220 vessels*, two Ionic columns before each dock, the admiral's house on the island raised high enough that he could watch the sea while nobody approaching from it could see in, and the whole enclosed by a double wall so that not even incoming merchants could see the dockyards. Excavation has broadly confirmed the layout and the scale, and has also dated the complex in its surviving form remarkably late — to the fourth or more probably the second century, between the wars with Rome. Even the fleet's monumental infrastructure, in other words, is an answer to a problem that arose rather than a founding feature.

Who rowed it is the question the sources do not answer, and honesty requires saying so plainly. No ancient writer states that Carthaginian oarsmen were citizens. The reading that they largely were — that a fleet of this size and skill implies a standing pool of trained men, that the naval establishment was permanent where armies were raised and disbanded, and that rowing was a livelihood for the poorer citizens of a great port much as it was at Athens — is a modern inference from the scale of the fleets and from the silence of the sources about hired crews, and it is a good inference, but it is an inference. Held at that confidence, it suggests something the later modules must test rather than assume: that this order ran two floors on two different principles, an army composed of subjects and specialists pointed outward, and a fleet manned substantially from the city itself. The pattern of failure differs accordingly. Carthaginian armies mutinied, changed sides, and were annihilated and re-bought. Carthaginian fleets were destroyed repeatedly and rebuilt repeatedly, and are not recorded turning on the city that manned them.

The day the floor turned around

The army did. Justin's account of Malchus, placed in the sixth century, is the earliest recorded Carthaginian civil war and it is worth following in detail, because everything about the order's later machinery is a response to it.

After defeat in Sardinia, the general and the survivors of his army were sentenced to remain in exile. They sent envoys asking to come home and were refused, whereupon *the troops, after some days, went on board ship, and came under arms to the city, when they called gods and men to witness that "they were not come to overthrow, but to recover their country; and that they would show their countrymen that it was not valour, but fortune, that had failed them in the preceding war."* They cut the supplies and besieged Carthage. During the siege Malchus' own son Cartalo arrived, returning from Tyre where he had been sent by the city to deliver a tenth of the Sicilian plunder to Melqart,

and presented himself in the camp in his priestly purple; his father, in a speech Justin renders at length, had him nailed to a cross in his finery within sight of the walls. Malchus then took the city, *put ten senators to death, he left the city to the government of its laws* — and was himself shortly afterwards executed on a charge of aspiring to be king.

Two centuries later Aristotle, working from informants and building a comparative argument about mixed constitutions, wrote that *the Carthaginians have never had any rebellion worth speaking of, and have never been under the rule of a tyrant*. Both statements are in the record and neither is simply false. What the pair actually shows is the character of Carthaginian internal violence: episodic, confined to the coordinating class, resolved quickly, and — the decisive point — never moving the settlement. An army besieged the city, executed ten senators, and then restored the laws. A man who might have made himself king was killed by the same machinery he had just captured. Possession changed hands for a season; nothing about who held the land or the trade changed at all. It is exactly the pattern this collection has learned to read carefully, because an interregnum with a dramatic cast is the easiest thing in the world to mistake for a revolution.

And then the magnates did what men in their position do: they invented an institution to stop it happening again. Justin gives the reasoning in a single sentence that is the most valuable line in this module. Because *so numerous a family of commanders was dangerous to the liberty of the state, since they themselves managed and decided everything, a hundred judges were chosen out of the senate, who were to demand of the generals, when they returned from war, an account of their proceedings, in order that, under this control, they might exercise their command in war with a regard to the judicature and laws at home*.

There is the whole method of this study in one clause. Nobody was implementing a constitution. A body of wealthy men, having watched two generations of a single military family monopolise command and having lately had their walls besieged by their own returning army, selected a standing committee out of their own number to audit generals on return. It is the tribunal Aristotle would later know as the Hundred and Four and rank above the Spartan ephorate, and it was assembled out of the materials at hand to solve the problem actually in front of them. That it outlived every man who created it, and was still constraining Hannibal three centuries later, is a fact about what corporate bodies do, not about anyone's foresight.

The tribunal's instrument was terror, and the direction it faced is the module's sharpest structural finding. Carthage crucified its failed commanders, and Polybius records it twice in the opening years of the First Punic War alone without treating it as

remarkable: the officer who gave up the citadel at Messene was crucified for lack of judgement and courage, and Hannibal, after losing ships in Sardinia, *was summarily arrested by the surviving Carthaginians and crucified*. Justin's Himilco, returning with an army destroyed by plague, walked through the city in the mean dress of a slave, lamented publicly, went into his house, shut the door on his own sons and killed himself. Whether or not that scene is embroidered, the practice it dramatises is independently attested, and the pattern across the whole record is unmistakable. Nearly every recorded Carthaginian execution is of a general or a senator. In an order whose army was raised from subjects and strangers, the cross was reserved for the coordinating class, and the body that wielded it had been created by that class against itself.

Who could not leave

The framework asks, of any floor, who was disarmed and who was made unable to flee. Carthage returns an unusual answer to the first half and defers the second.

The Libyans were not disarmed. They were conscripted — which is the opposite operation, and which meant that the largest subject population in the empire contained, at all times, tens of thousands of men with recent campaign experience and the habit of standing in a line. That is a fact of enormous downstream consequence, and it is the reason the rising of 241 was a mortal danger rather than a disturbance. What held the Libyan cultivator in place was never his lack of a spear. It was the assessment on his harvest, the garrisoned towns of the plain, and the fact that the interior he might flee into was itself increasingly a zone of Carthaginian clients and Carthaginian subsidies. Those instruments belong to Modules 5 and 6 and are measured there.

As for the city, the floor it built for itself was built to hold a position rather than a population. Appian describes a triple wall across the isthmus, each some forty-five feet high and thirty wide, with barracks for twenty-four thousand men and stables for four thousand horses and three hundred elephants — figures from a single late writer, given here as he gives them and worth no more than that. The direction of all of it is outward. There is no record of a citadel garrison holding down the Carthaginian populace, no political police, no standing internal security organ. Whatever kept the citizens of Carthage in their places, it was not a garrison, and Module 5 will have to say what it was.

Reading the floor against the framework

Three refinements follow, and the third is the one to carry.

The floor need not come first. The chain this collection runs on states that force is the founding fact and belief is laid over it afterwards to make the holding cheap. That order is right in the overwhelming majority of cases and it is wrong here, and the exception is instructive rather than fatal. Where a party arrives without conquering, on ground it is renting, with a trade rather than a territory to protect, it can run a settlement and a robe for a very long time with no floor worth the name — and the moment the deferral ends is dateable and has a single cause. Carthage raised an army when it resolved to keep land it had been paying for. The refinement to carry forward is that **the floor becomes necessary at the point the order acquires ground it means to hold, not at the point it acquires wealth**; commerce can be defended by ships and contracts, and only land requires a permanent instrument of violence and the apparatus that feeds one.

"Bought" is the wrong word for most of it, and the wrong word has consequences. The seed of this study, and the corpus's general expectation, treated Carthage as the definitive case of a purchased floor. The evidence does not support that as stated. The bulk of Carthaginian land forces were conscripted from subject communities that owed men along with tribute — which is what most territorial states do — while the purchased element was a specialist layer laid on top. The correction matters because it relocates the fault line. The danger in this arrangement was never simply that a hired army might go unpaid. It was that **no man in the line had a position that was defended by defending the arrangement**: the Iberian was under contract, the Numidian was under his own chief, and the Libyan conscript's holding was made worse, not better, by the order he marched for. An order whose fighting men are all people whose situation the order has damaged has a default that fails from the bottom of the chain, which is the rarer and more dangerous variety, and Module 8 will have to test whether anything else in the structure compensated.

The terror faced upward, and this is a variant worth naming. The cost column in these studies is normally reconstructed from below — the garrison, the penal code, the visible gallows that price a peasant's defection. In Carthage the sharpest instrument in the apparatus was pointed the other way. The cross was for generals; the tribunal that ordered it was invented by the magnates against their own most successful members; and it was created in direct response to an episode in which the army had turned on the city. The framework should record this as a distinct configuration: **an apex that polices its own coordinating class more severely than it polices its subjects.** It is not obviously irrational. Where the men who might replace you are your

own commanders, and the men underneath are strangers on contract or subjects with no route to the centre, the greater risk really does sit above. What such a policy buys, and what it costs in the quality of generalship when a commander knows that a lost battle means a cross, is the question this study will carry into the modules on coordination and collapse.

A note on sources. The exact quotations here are public-domain primary material. Justin's *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* is quoted throughout from John Selby Watson's translation: the account of Mago as the first to organise Punic military discipline (19.1); the war with the Africans over the ground-rent and its settlement by payment (19.1); the remission of the tribute under the next generation (19.2); the Malchus episode, the army's declaration that it came "not to overthrow, but to recover" its country, the crucifixion of Cartalo, the execution of ten senators and the restoration of the laws (18.7); and the creation of the hundred judges to audit returning generals (19.2). Justin is a late epitomator of a lost history and every one of these passages rests on him alone; the tribunal he calls a hundred judges is the body known elsewhere, including to Aristotle, as the Hundred and Four, and the discrepancy is left standing rather than reconciled. Polybius is quoted from W. R. Paton's Loeb translation: the comparison of Roman and Carthaginian military institutions at 6.52; the arrival and departure of Xanthippus and the battle outside Tunis in 255 (1.32–36); and the crucifixion of Hannibal after Sardinia (1.24). Polybius' characterisation of Carthaginian troops as foreign and mercenary is quoted in full precisely because the module argues against taking it at face value; the composition of the mutinous army of 241 at Polybius 1.67, with Libyans as the largest element, is reported here from the standard summaries of that passage rather than quoted. Diodorus on the Sacred Band at the Crimissus (16.80.4) is given in the Loeb wording as reproduced in the secondary literature; the unit's historicity is genuinely disputed and the dispute is stated in the body. Aristotle on Carthage never having suffered serious sedition or a tyrant is quoted from Benjamin Jowett's translation of *Politics* 2.11. Appian's description of the circular harbour and its shipyards, and of the triple landward wall with its barracks and stables, is quoted and reported from the White translation; Appian wrote three centuries after the destruction, drew on a lost portion of Polybius, and his figures are given as he gives them and should not be treated as measurements. Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited: Bret Devereaux on the misuse of "mercenary" for what were largely subject levies; Gregory Daly on the organisation of Carthaginian contingents by nationality; Adrian Goldsworthy and others on the inference that the fleet was substantially citizen-manned, which is flagged in the text as an inference and not an attested fact; and the excavation reports on the Punic ports, which broadly confirm

Appian's layout while dating the complex in its surviving form to the last century or two of the city's life. Dates are given as ranges where the record disagrees — the Crimissus as 341 or 339, the remission of the Libyan tribute as somewhere in the first half of the fifth century — and numbers are attributed to the writer who supplies them.

THE COUNTRY HOUSES, ONE AFTER ANOTHER

Module 2 · the settlement — how a city that began by renting its own footprint came to own the best arable in Africa, who was let inside the arrangement and on what terms, and why the instrument that performed the taking has left no paper at all

In the summer of 310 a Syracusan army under Agathocles landed on the African coast, burned its own ships to make retreat impossible, and marched inland toward a town Diodorus calls Megalepolis. The soldiers were frightened and far from home, and what they saw on the road did more to steady them than any speech. The passage is the single best description of the Carthaginian settlement that survives, and it is worth having whole.

The intervening country through which it was necessary for them to march was divided into gardens and plantations of every kind, since many streams of water were led in small channels and irrigated every part. There were also country houses one after another, constructed in luxurious fashion and covered with stucco, which gave evidence of the wealth of the people who possessed them. The farm buildings were filled with everything that was needful for enjoyment, seeing that the inhabitants in a long period of peace had stored up an abundant variety of products. Part of the land was planted with vines, and part yielded olives and was also planted thickly with other varieties of fruit-bearing trees. On each side herds of cattle and flocks of sheep pastured on the plain, and the neighbouring meadows were filled with grazing horses. In general there was a manifold prosperity in the region, since the leading Carthaginians had laid out there their private estates and with their wealth had beautified them for their enjoyment.

Say plainly what this evidence is and is not. Diodorus is writing three centuries later, drawing on a source who appears to have accompanied the expedition, and the description has a narrative job to do: the very next sentence tells us the Sicilians *were buoyed up by expectation, for they beheld prizes commensurate with their dangers ready at hand for the victors*. A passage designed to explain why an army recovered its nerve is a passage to read carefully. But the detail cuts the other way as well, because a writer inventing a rich country does not invent irrigation channels running in small conduits, or the stucco on the walls, or the distinction between the vine ground and the olive

ground. And the phrase that matters most for this module is the last one: the leading Carthaginians had laid out there their *private estates*.

Four centuries earlier this city had paid an annual rent to Libyans for the ground it stood on. Now its first families held the arable behind it as personal property, improved it for their own enjoyment, and had done so for long enough that the storerooms were full from a long peace. Somewhere between those two facts a settlement was made. This module is the attempt to see it.

What the instrument found, and the instrument that is missing

The framework requires, before anything else, a reconstruction of how the wealth was held *before* — whether the thing being divided was a thing at all, or a relation between persons expressed in access to soil. On the first half the answer is reasonably clear and on the second half the evidence has been destroyed, and both halves must be said.

Before the Carthaginians took it, the plain behind the Gulf of Tunis was worked by Libyan populations who held it in the way stateless agrarian societies generally do: through descent group, locality and long use, with no register, no title and no market, because there was nothing to sell. A man's fields were an expression of his standing among his own people. That is a relation, not a thing, and it cannot be transferred, because transferring it would mean transferring him.

By the fourth century the same ground is in the hands of named Carthaginian magnates who treat it as alienable property. We know this not from any Punic law — none survives — but from the one fragment of Carthaginian agricultural writing to come down to us. Mago's manual on husbandry, of which more below, opened with practical advice that Columella preserved: *One who has bought land should sell his town house*, so that he will not find himself preferring the household gods of the city to those of the country; a man who takes more pleasure in his town residence, Mago added, has no need of an estate at all. The instruction is banal and the presupposition inside it is not. Land was bought. Town houses were sold. There were men in Carthage who owned both and had to be told which one to give up.

So the conversion happened — relation into thing, occupation into estate, exactly the operation the framework says every settlement must perform first. What is missing is the instrument. There is no Carthaginian land code, no cadastre, no survey, no grant, no register, no confirmation of title, not one document of conveyance. This is not simply the ordinary poverty of the Punic record: several thousand Punic inscriptions survive, mostly votive stelae, many of them naming men and their offices across four generations, and there is no land document among them. The taking is visible entirely

in its results and not at all in its mechanism, and that is the first thing this module has to explain rather than lament.

What can be dated is the window. The wars that produced the estates are the same wars that cancelled the rent: the campaigns against the Africans under Mago's sons in the sixth century, which Carthage lost and settled by payment, and the campaigns of the following generation which ended the tribute for good somewhere in the first half of the fifth. Behind them came the systematic reduction of the plain, so that by 310 Agathocles could take, on Diodorus' count, more than two hundred towns in the region. The land came into Carthaginian hands by conquest, over roughly a century and a half, and the estates were laid out on ground taken by an army.

The fiction that was never needed

Here the framework asks a question that has been productive in every colonial case in this collection and returns, at Carthage, a blank — and the blank is the module's first contribution.

The framework identifies three families of settlement fiction. *Vacancy* declares occupied land empty. *Recognition* declares that a grantee already owned what he is being given. *Divisibility* declares a collective holding partible into shares that can then be sold. Each does a different job, and which one a conqueror reaches for tells you what he actually wanted. Carthage reached for none of them. There is no Punic doctrine of the empty land, no ceremony confirming Libyan headmen in estates they had never held, no statute dissolving lineage holdings into saleable parcels.

The reason is not that Carthage was more honest. It is that those three fictions are not addressed to the dispossessed at all — they are addressed to somebody at home who must be able to go on believing that his state acquires things lawfully. Vacancy, recognition and divisibility are instruments for laundering a seizure past an audience that would object to a seizure. **Carthage had no such audience.** Tyre could not call it to account and by the fifth century was under Persian suzerainty. There was no metropolitan electorate, no external law the order answered to, no rival power with standing to ask. And the men who took the land were the same men who sat in the council, judged in the courts, commanded the armies and held the priesthoods; the taker and the auditor were one person.

The refinement to carry forward is therefore this: **the settlement's fiction is a function of a divided audience, and where the takers and the audience are the same men, no fiction is generated and none survives.** The elaboration of a colonial land instrument really is the measure of the constraint the metropole imposed — and Carthage is the control case that shows what happens when the constraint is absent.

The historian is left with villas and no deeds. It follows, uncomfortably, that the cases this corpus can document best are the ones where somebody had to be lied to, and that the silence of a record is not evidence that a taking was gentler; it may be evidence that nobody had to be persuaded.

The caveat must be stated at equal weight: this is an argument from silence, and the archive burned in 146. It is offered as the best reading of an absence, not as a proof.

Who was inside

The boundary of the settlement at Carthage was drawn by a set of statuses rather than a single line, and the statuses can be reconstructed with reasonable confidence.

At the centre were the citizens of Carthage itself — the men who filled the assembly Aristotle describes, who supplied the officers and the elite formation destroyed at the Crimissus, and who were called out in a body only when the city was directly threatened. Around them, and not beneath them, stood the old Phoenician cities of the African coast: Utica, Hadrumetum, Hippo, Leptis and the rest, which kept their own institutions and their own magistrates. Their standing is visible in an unexpected place. Polybius reproduces the second Roman treaty, conventionally dated to 348, and its opening names the parties: *There shall be friendship between the Romans and their allies, and the Carthaginians, Tyrians, and township of Utica*. Utica is a contracting party to Carthage's treaty, not a subject mentioned in it — and Tyre, four hundred years after the founding, is still named alongside its daughter.

Below the citizen towns came the population the Greek sources call Libyphoenicians: Punic-descended communities of the African towns, sharing the language, the gods and the material culture of Carthage without sharing its rights. Their position is defined most sharply by an obligation. By the third century they were the only group under Carthaginian rule legally bound to supply soldiers to the metropolis — a duty that is simultaneously a mark of inclusion and a mark of subordination, since it is precisely what full citizens were increasingly not asked to do.

Below them again were the Libyans of the plain: the cultivators, tributary in kind and liable to conscription, and the people whose labour stood behind the stucco. What their tenure was after the conquest is genuinely unclear and the scholarship divides — hired labourers, sharecroppers, dependent cultivators on their own ancestral plots now owing a share to a Carthaginian owner, or some mixture varying by district. What is not in doubt is the share. Polybius reports that during the First Punic War half the crop was taken from the Libyans as a war levy and the tribute due from the towns was doubled; the normal peacetime rate is inferred by most scholars at around a quarter, which is itself among the heaviest agrarian exactions in this corpus. Polybius adds the

judgement of the Carthaginian political class on its own governors, and it is worth stating in his terms even though it comes from a hostile pen: they honoured not the administrator who dealt moderately with the subjects but the one who brought in the most and handled the inhabitants hardest.

And beneath everything, slaves — attested in the households, on the estates and in the fleets, though the scale cannot be recovered. One detail conveys the ordinariness of the institution better than any estimate. When Agathocles plundered the Carthaginian camp after the battle outside Tunis, he found in the baggage waggons *more than twenty thousand pairs of manacles*, because the Carthaginians had expected to take the Greeks alive, shackle them, and throw them into slave pens. An army that carries fetters by the waggon-load has a market waiting.

Wealth as the entry ticket, and the province as the repayment

Now the transmission rule, which is where Carthage departs most sharply from the corpus.

In most of the orders this collection has examined, the settlement passes by blood or by office: a lineage inherits, or a post confers, and the boundary is a genealogy or an appointment. At Carthage the boundary was money, and Aristotle says so with visible distaste. The Carthaginians, he writes, *choose their magistrates, and particularly the highest of them -their kings and generals- with an eye both to merit and to wealth*. He regards this as the constitution's central defect and he goes further, alleging outright purchase: *it is surely a bad thing that the greatest offices, such as those of kings and generals, should be bought. The law which allows this abuse makes wealth of more account than virtue, and the whole state becomes avaricious.* And he supplies the mechanism that follows from it, in a sentence that explains a great deal about how Africa was governed: *Those who have been at the expense of purchasing their places will be in the habit of repaying themselves*. He notes too that one man commonly held several offices at once, which he thought bad practice.

Aristotle was a Greek philosopher working from informants, with a comparative thesis to advance and no first-hand knowledge of Carthage, and "bought" may be his interpretation of a system of expected liturgies and contributions rather than a literal price list. Held even at that discount, the structure is clear enough and it has two consequences that pull in opposite directions.

At the entrance it made the settlement unusually open. A man who made a fortune in the Spanish trade could buy into the governing class in a way that a rich man in a lineage aristocracy could not, and this is very likely part of why Aristotle believed

Carthage had escaped serious internal conflict. Wealth is a more permeable membrane than birth.

At the exit it made the settlement unusually extractive. A purchased place must be recouped, and the only place to recoup it is a population that is not inside the settlement. Aristotle names the incentive; Polybius names the result; and the Libyan cultivator rendering a quarter of his harvest in an ordinary year is where the two meet. **The openness of the oligarchy at its entrance was paid for at its periphery**, and that is not a paradox but an arithmetic identity: if the price of admission is money, somebody outside must supply it.

The panacea

Which brings us to the sentence in which Aristotle, without meaning to, describes the whole Carthaginian settlement and predicts how it would fail.

The government of the Carthaginians is oligarchic, but they successfully escape the evils of oligarchy by enriching one portion of the people after another by sending them to their colonies. This is their panacea and the means by which they give stability to the state. Accident favors them, but the legislator should be able to provide against revolution without trusting to accidents. As things are, if any misfortune occurred, and the bulk of the subjects revolted, there would be no way of restoring peace by legal methods.

The framework asks of every settlement whether each beneficiary, in defending his own position, thereby defends the whole arrangement — and whether the arrangement seats the claimants it produces. Aristotle answers both questions in three lines. The Carthaginian poor were not bought off with land at home, with debt relief, or with a share of the public revenue. They were bought off with postings: sent out in rotation to the dependent towns of Africa, Sardinia and Sicily, seated on the machinery of extraction, and allowed to grow rich on it. **The empire was the settlement.** A Carthaginian's route to property ran through somebody else's town.

That answers a question Module 1 left open. There was no garrison holding down the citizens of Carthage because none was needed: the citizen body had been converted, individual by individual and generation by generation, into shareholders in the subjection of Africa. It also explains a fact that would otherwise look like carelessness — that Carthage armed and trained its Libyan subjects while disarming nobody. The order simply did not experience its own subjects as the danger, because from inside the city every visible interest pointed the same way.

And then there is the last clause, written around 340 by a man who had never been there. If the bulk of the subjects revolted, there would be no legal method of restoring

peace. In 241 the bulk of the subjects revolted. There was no legal method, and Carthage restored peace by crucifixion.

The consideration, and the weakest link

The framework's most diagnostic question is what each party owed in return, and specifically whether the return included armed service — because a grant that buys service leaves a rival with a retinue, while a grant that buys compliance leaves a dependant with a title. At Carthage the answer splits by group, and the split is the finding.

The Carthaginian magnate owed the city money and command. He did not owe, and did not keep, a private retinue: there is no evidence anywhere in the record of Carthaginian nobles with armed followings of their own, no Punic equivalent of the baronial affinity, and the one commander who did come home with an army behind him was executed for it within the year. The capacity for organised violence stayed with the state and was rented from abroad. Applying the default test, this man is emphatically better off with the arrangement standing, and he defends it by defending himself.

The Phoenician cities owed contingents and contributions and kept their institutions; Utica kept enough standing to be named in a treaty. Better off, on balance, and for two centuries they behaved as though they thought so.

The Libyphoenician towns owed men by law. Better off than the Libyans, worse than the citizens, and holding a status defined by an obligation nobody at the centre carried.

The Libyan cultivator owed a quarter of his crop in a normal year, half in a bad one, and his sons. Run the default question on him and it returns the opposite answer from everybody above: he is worse off than he would be if the arrangement collapsed tomorrow, he knows it, and — because the same arrangement conscripted rather than disarmed him — he has been given a spear and taught to stand in a line. That is the weakest link in the chain and it is at the bottom rather than the top, which is the rarer and more dangerous configuration. The order's whole stability rested on the fact that the man with the strongest reason to break it had, for a long time, no way to coordinate with anyone who could.

The one book Rome kept

There is a coda to this module that says more about what the settlement actually was than any of the foregoing, and it happens after the city is gone.

When Carthage fell in 146 the Roman Senate disposed of its libraries by giving them to the Numidian kings — the histories, the annals, whatever six centuries of a literate civilisation had accumulated, handed to a neighbouring dynasty and thereafter lost. One work was exempted. Mago's treatise on husbandry, twenty-eight books in Punic, was brought to Rome, and the Senate commissioned Decimus Junius Silanus, a nobleman who knew the language, to translate the whole of it into Latin at public expense. A Greek abridgement by Cassius Dionysius of Utica followed around 88. Varro rated Mago above the Greek authorities on agriculture; Columella called him the father of husbandry and quoted him directly. The Punic original and the Latin translation are both lost, and Mago survives only in fragments quoted by the men who used him.

Read that decision the way the framework reads any decision, from the position of the men making it. A senate that had just resolved to erase a city, and that had disposed of its written memory by giving it away, stopped and legislated to preserve its manual of estate management. What Rome wanted from Carthage was not its gods, its constitution or its past. It was the technology of the settlement — how to plant the vine and the olive on that soil, how to manage the press, the herd, the overseer and the labour, on ground that would shortly be growing grain for Rome. The estate system Diodorus' Sicilians had walked through in 310 was captured intact and carried on under new owners, which is why the note this module might otherwise have expected was never called, and why Roman Africa became a granary within a generation of the destruction.

And the surviving fragment tells you who Mago wrote for. A man is advised to sell his town house because he has bought an estate, and warned that if he prefers the town he should not have bought one. That is a handbook for merchants becoming landowners — written, at some point in the last centuries of the city, for exactly the class whose stuccoed villas an invading army had admired from the road.

Reading the settlement against the framework

Three findings, in ascending order of weight.

A settlement can be transmitted by money rather than by blood or office, and the price is paid outside it. This is a genuine addition to the corpus's inventory. Where the entry ticket to the coordinating class is purchase, the purchase must be recouped, and it will be recouped from whoever lies beyond the boundary. An oligarchy that looks unusually permeable from inside can be unusually harsh at its periphery for exactly that reason, and the two facts are one fact. Aristotle records the

incentive and Polybius records the outcome, two centuries apart and from opposite dispositions toward Carthage, which is about as good as corroboration gets in this case.

The safety valve ran inward through the empire rather than outward from it, and this fuses two Menu families. The Export solution sends surplus claimants to a frontier where their ambition troubles somebody else; the Co-opt solution binds a rival class to the centre by giving it something to lose. Carthage did both with one instrument, by sending its own surplus citizens into its subject towns and seating them on the extraction. The consequence is structural and should be recorded: **in such an order the metropolis's internal stability and the periphery's grievance are the same fact, produced by the same mechanism.** Every man pacified at home was a man installed on somebody's revenue abroad. Aristotle saw that this worked and that it was luck rather than legislation; Module 8 will have to ask what it did to the order's ability to see the danger it was manufacturing.

And the settlement's fiction is a function of a divided audience. This is the module's main contribution and it revises the framework's own instrument. The three fictions — vacancy, recognition, divisibility — have been so productive in the colonial studies that their absence here reads at first as a gap in the evidence. It is not. Those fictions exist to make a taking legible as a lawful transaction to an audience that would not accept it as a taking, and they are generated only where the takers must answer to somebody who is not themselves. Carthage answered to nobody: no metropole with a legal conscience, no home electorate, no external jurisdiction. So the land was taken by an army, held by the men who had sent the army, and recorded nowhere. **The elaboration is the measure of the constraint, and the silence is the measure of its absence.** A corpus that reads documentation as evidence of the seriousness of a taking will systematically misjudge every order that never had to explain itself — and will find, as here, only the country houses, one after another, covered with stucco, and no paper at all saying whose they were or how they came to be.

A note on sources. The exact quotations are public-domain primary material. Diodorus Siculus on the countryside between the coast and Megalepolis (20.8.3–5), on the soldiers' response to it, and on the manacles found in the Carthaginian baggage after the battle outside Tunis (20.13.1–2) are quoted from the Loeb translation as reproduced at LacusCurtius, where the text is in the public domain. Diodorus wrote in the first century BC about events of 310 and appears to have drawn on a source close to the expedition; the description of the estates serves a narrative purpose in his account and is flagged as such in the body. Aristotle on Carthage is quoted from Benjamin Jowett's translation of *Politics* 2.11 (1272b24–1273b25): the qualification of magistrates by wealth as well as merit, the purchase of the offices of king and general,

the habit of repaying oneself, the plurality of offices, and the passage on enriching one portion of the people after another by sending them to the colonies, together with the warning about a revolt of the subject class. Aristotle wrote around 340 from informants and with a comparative thesis to advance; the caution is stated in the body rather than reserved to this note. The second Roman treaty naming "the Carthaginians, Tyrians, and township of Utica" is quoted from Evelyn Shuckburgh's translation of Polybius 3.24; the first treaty of 509 and Polybius' own remark that its phrasing shows the Carthaginians regarded Libya and Sardinia as their own are drawn from Polybius 3.22–23 in W. R. Paton's Loeb translation. Polybius on the Libyan exactions during the First Punic War — half the crop as a war levy, the towns' tribute doubled — and on the Carthaginians' preference for the harshest governors is from 1.72 and is here reported and paraphrased rather than quoted, since the wording available to me is secondary; the inferred normal rate of about one quarter is a scholarly reconstruction and is given as such. Mago's opening advice to sell one's town house is quoted, in its first clause only, from Columella's citation at *De Re Rustica* 1.1.18 as reproduced in the standard reference literature, the remainder paraphrased. The fate of the Carthaginian libraries in 146, the Senate's commission to Decimus Junius Silanus, the Greek abridgement by Cassius Dionysius of Utica around 88, and the estimates of Mago by Varro, Columella and Pliny follow the standard accounts and are paraphrased. Modern scholarship on the status of the Libyan cultivators is genuinely divided between readings as hired labour, sharecropping and dependent tenure, and the division is reported rather than resolved. Figures are given as their authors give them: the two hundred and more towns taken by Agathocles and the twenty thousand pairs of manacles are Diodorus'. The claim that no Punic land document survives among the several thousand extant Punic inscriptions is stated in the body as an argument from silence, made in the knowledge that the city's archive was destroyed.

BECAUSE HE HEARD HIS VOICE

Module 3 · the robe — a city that spent almost nothing persuading the people it ruled, everything settling its accounts with its gods, and a tenth of its public revenue on a temple in a country it did not obey

Every order in this collection lays some story over its floor of force. The way to find it is to ask what the order mass-produced — the coin legend, the accession formula, the liturgy, the catechism — because whatever an apex repeated is whatever it needed repeated. Carthage mass-produced one text. It survives in some thousands of copies cut into limestone, it ran with only minor variation for six centuries, and it goes like this:

> *LRBT LTNT PN B'L WL'DN LB'L ḤMN 'Š NDR ... K ŠM' QL' YBRK'*
> *To the lady, to Tinnit-face-of-Baal, and to the lord, to Baal Hammon, thus vowed [name, son of name, son of name] ... for they heard his voice. May they bless him!*

Read that as an apex's statement of what holds its world together, because that is what it is. There is no cosmology in it. There is no account of the origin of the world, no ranking of peoples, no claim that Carthage rules by right or that its magistrates are anybody's deputies. There is no king. There is a transaction: a man made a promise, the god performed, the man is now paying, and he wants it on the record that he paid. The gods here are not sovereigns issuing law; they are counterparties who keep their side and expect yours.

This is a genuinely unusual robe and the whole module follows from getting it right. The framework's usual questions — what does the belief claim about authority, what act of force does it sanctify, what does it teach the subject about his place — mostly return blanks at Carthage, and the blanks are informative. What Carthage had instead was a religion of accounts, addressed by the men who ran the city to powers they believed could be paid, and addressed almost not at all to the people they ruled.

Nobody was preaching at the Libyans

Begin with the absence, because it is the largest fact in the module and it is easy to walk past.

There is no Carthaginian legitimating claim directed at the subject population. No doctrine that Punic rule over Africa was ordained or benevolent. No mission. No civilising story. No covenant offered to Libyan communities, no attempt to enrol Libyan elites in a Carthaginian cult as a condition of standing, no priesthood sent inland. The Libyan cultivator surrendering a quarter of his harvest in an ordinary year and half in a bad one was given no reason at all why he should. He was given an assessment and a garrison.

The framework's sharpest diagnostic applies directly here and it cuts in the unfamiliar direction. Where an apex that already holds uncontested force still pays a real, avoidable price for legitimacy, the expenditure is the evidence that some audience's recognition was genuinely needed. The converse is equally a finding: **where an apex holds a population by force and spends nothing further on persuading it, that population's belief was not required.** Carthage held Africa with levies, garrisons and assessments and spent its legitimating budget elsewhere entirely — on its own citizens, on the wider Phoenician world, and on the gods. That is the shape of a colonial order at the expensive pole, held together by surveillance and force rather than conviction, and it is exactly what the collapse of 241 would test.

One complication must be admitted rather than suppressed. Baal Hammon and Tanit did in the end travel inland: under Roman rule the same divine couple appears across Numidia and the African interior as Saturn and Caelestis, worshipped by Berber-descended populations for centuries after Carthage was rubble. Some scholars have argued that elements of Tanit herself were Libyan from early on. But diffusion is not policy, and the framework's question is what the apex *spent*, not what eventually spread. There is no evidence that Carthage ever directed its cult outward as an instrument, and a good deal of evidence that the cult's centre of gravity was a walled precinct in the capital used by the capital's own families.

What the votive stele was doing

So who was the robe for? Look at what a stele actually is as an object, and at who paid for one.

A stele in the tophet at Carthage is a marker set over a buried urn, cut with the formula above and a name. Some of them add more. One in the Penn Museum, of the later Punic period, reads to Tinnit-face-of-Baal and to Baal Hammon *(this is what) vowed Ḥanno [son of] Ger'ashtart the ra-b(?) son of Ḥimilkot the [sufe-s son of Eshmun]* — the dedicant tracing four generations and pausing to record that his father had been a *rab*, a high magistrate, and his grandfather a suffete, one of the two annually elected heads of the state.

That is not private piety. That is a man of the governing class, in the city's most conspicuous sacred ground, recording simultaneously that he has paid his god and that he comes from three generations of office-holders. The precinct where the vows were discharged was also the precinct where the settlement displayed itself. And this matters because Carthage had no other instrument for the job. There was no divine kingship: the suffetes were annual magistrates, chosen for wealth and merit, and no Carthaginian family claimed descent from a god. There was no hereditary sacred caste separate from the political class; the priesthoods were held by the same families that held the offices. There was no oath of fealty binding a nobility to a crown, because there was no crown. In an order like that, the question *how does a magnate demonstrate that he is inside the arrangement* has to be answered somehow, and at Carthage the answer was: publicly, expensively, at the tophet.

The precinct

Which brings the module to the thing it cannot avoid and must not handle badly.

Start with what is not in dispute. Just north of the commercial harbour, from around 750 until the destruction, the Carthaginians maintained a walled open-air precinct of about six thousand square metres. Into it, in nine descending strata, they placed urns — on the excavated estimates upwards of twenty thousand of them — containing the cremated remains of infants and very young children, frequently together with the burnt bones of lambs and kids, marked at first by rough stones and from the sixth century by inscribed stelae dedicated to Tanit and Baal Hammon. The urns are often imported pottery from Corinth or Egypt, which is to say expensive. The practice ran without interruption for six hundred years and the same institution appears at Motya, Sulcis, Tharros, Hadrumetum and other Punic sites. It is the single most characteristic material fact of Punic civilisation.

The dispute is over what was happening, and it is a live scholarly dispute rather than a settled one, so it should be reported as such. In 2010 and 2012 Schwartz, Houghton, Bondioli and Macchiarelli published osteological work arguing from the age profile that the tophet was a cemetery for those who died shortly before or after birth, whatever the cause — a reading that made the Greek and Roman accusations of sacrifice look like the propaganda of enemies. Smith, Stager, Greene and Avishai replied in 2011 and 2013 that the age estimates had failed to allow for the shrinkage bone undergoes in cremation, that once corrected the deaths peak between one and one and a half months, and that this distribution does not match natural infant mortality at any comparable site. In the same 2013 issue Xella, Quinn, Melchiorri and van Dommelen argued for sacrifice from the epigraphy and the archaeology rather than the bones. The

present weight of specialist opinion has moved back toward sacrifice, without unanimity and without the reading that everything in the precinct was sacrificial.

The epigraphic evidence deserves separate weight because it does not depend on anybody's osteology. A number of the stelae use the term *mlk* for what was given — and, crucially, some specify *mlk 'mr*, a *mlk* of a lamb. A liturgical formula for substituting an animal exists only where there is something the animal is being substituted for. The vocabulary of the cult, in the Carthaginians' own language and their own hand, contains a commutation clause; and a commutation clause is evidence about the obligation it commutes.

The literary sources are late, hostile, and mostly Greek or Roman, and they should be named as such: Diodorus, Plutarch, Tertullian, the fragment of Cleitarchus, all of them writing in traditions with reasons to blacken Carthage. But the discipline cuts both ways. Reflexive dismissal of an enemy's testimony is as much a failure of method as credulity, and it becomes untenable when the accused civilisation's own inscriptions, in its own script, name a rite of substitution for exactly the thing the enemy alleges.

For the purposes of this module the interpretive question can be held open, because the structural question is answerable either way. Whichever reading of the bones prevails, the institution is the same: an enormous, sustained, public, expensive religious commitment, maintained for six centuries, in which the leading families of the city gave up their own infants to the gods, cut their names in stone beside the urns, and recorded their fathers' magistracies while they did it. The framework's question about any such commitment is what it buys and from whom, and the answer here is not obscure. In an order with no divine king, no sacred bloodline and no oath of fealty, the tophet was the mechanism by which a Carthaginian demonstrated, irreversibly and in public, that he had paid what membership cost. There is no cheaper way to fake it.

The deviation, and what it shows

Now to the sharpest evidence in the module, which is a single passage of Diodorus and which the framework's own instrument reads in a way that most accounts miss.

In 310, with Agathocles encamped outside the walls, the Carthaginians concluded that their misfortune was the anger of the gods and set about diagnosing the arrears. Diodorus reports that *they also alleged that Cronus had turned against them inasmuch as in former times they had been accustomed to sacrifice to this god the noblest of their sons, but more recently, secretly buying and nurturing children, they had sent these to the sacrifice; and when an investigation was made, some of those who had been sacrificed were discovered to have been supposititious*. The remedy followed: *they selected two hundred of*

the noblest children and sacrificed them publicly; and others who were under suspicion sacrificed themselves voluntarily, in number not less than three hundred.

Take the passage apart. It is one late hostile witness and the numbers should not be treated as counts. But the *structure* of what he reports is not the kind of thing a hostile source invents, because it is not simply damning — it is embarrassing in two incompatible directions at once, and hostile inventions are usually simpler than that.

The framework's discipline at the apex is the deviation test: sincere belief and its strategic use cannot be told apart while a man does what his doctrine requires, but the direction in which he departs from the doctrine is a window. Here the record shows a departure and then a return, and both are informative.

The departure — buying poor children and passing them off as one's own — reads, at first glance, as pure cynicism: an elite performing a rite it does not believe, at somebody else's expense. But that reading does not survive the second half. Men who believe nothing do not, when the enemy reaches the walls, hand over two hundred of their own children in public and then supply three hundred more voluntarily. Whatever else that is, it is not theatre for an audience, because the audience that mattered was besieging them and could not see it.

The honest reading is the third one the framework insists on holding open, and it is neither the sincere nor the cynical but something more human than either. **The belief was real, and the price was negotiated.** Every religion with a substitution provision contains exactly this: an obligation held as genuine, and a permitted commutation that lets the obligation be discharged more cheaply in ordinary times. The *mlk 'mr* on the stelae is that commutation written into the liturgy; buying a child was the same evasion pushed past the point the liturgy allowed. And the response to catastrophe was not to abandon the doctrine but to suspend the commutation and pay in full — which is precisely what one expects from people who believe the account is real and now think it is badly overdrawn.

That yields something the framework should carry. **A robe with a priced commutation clause is evidence that the belief is genuine and the price is contested, not that the belief is a performance** — and the suspension of the commutation in an emergency is a reliable tell of real conviction under pressure rather than of a spectacle staged for onlookers. It also gives a Carthaginian magnate's position its exact shape: he believed the debt, he minimised the payment, and when the city was about to fall he stopped minimising.

Tested, revealed, or in arrears

The framework asks of every doctrine whether it is *tested* — revised when the evidence defeats it — or *revealed*, so that failure is read as insufficient faith. Carthage returns neither, and the third setting is worth adding to the card.

The Punic robe was **contractual**, and in a contractual religion failure is read as neither refutation nor faithlessness but as **arrears**. The god has not been disproved and the worshipper has not been insufficiently devout; the account is simply behind, and the remedy is payment. Diodorus' 310 passage is that logic operating in real time: defeat prompts an audit, the audit finds unpaid obligations to two creditors — Baal Hammon at home and Melqart at Tyre — and both are settled, one in children and one in gold shrines and money.

Read structurally, this is an exceptionally durable configuration and an exceptionally expensive one, for the same reason. It is unfalsifiable in the most complete way available, because there is no outcome that can defeat it: any disaster proves only that more was owed. And its cost scales with the danger, because the worse things get the larger the arrears must have been. A revealed doctrine demands more belief in a crisis; a contractual one demands more payment. Carthage in 310 is what the second looks like when the bill is presented all at once.

The tenth that went east

The other creditor deserves its own section, because it is the clearest instance in this study of the framework's revealed-preference test.

Diodorus, explaining the same crisis, describes an obligation Carthage had let lapse: *since they had come as colonists from that city, it had been their custom in the earlier period to send to the god a tenth of all that was paid into the public revenue; but later, when they had acquired great wealth and were receiving more considerable revenues, they sent very little indeed, holding the divinity of little account*. A tenth of public revenue, annually, to the temple of Melqart at Tyre.

Consider what that payment was, from the position of the men authorising it. By the fifth century Carthage was incomparably the greater city. Tyre took no Carthaginian orders, had no jurisdiction, no army that could cross the sea, and was itself successively a Persian and then a Seleucid dependency. Nothing whatever compelled the payment. It was made anyway, on the sources' account for centuries, and it was resumed in a panic when it had lapsed. By the framework's rule, force never pays for what it does not need, so the expenditure itself is the evidence: some audience's recognition was being purchased.

Whose? Not Tyre's power, which did not exist. The best available reading is that Carthage's standing among the *other* western Phoenicians rested on seniority within a family — Utica, Motya, Sulcis, Gades and the rest were Tyrian foundations too, and Carthage's claim to lead them was a claim about descent, not conquest. The annual embassy to Melqart was the visible proof that the claim was good. That reading is strengthened by the treaty of 348 naming the parties as the Carthaginians, the Tyrians, and the township of Utica: three centuries on, Tyre is still in the instrument.

It is strengthened further by an episode two centuries earlier. When Malchus' mutinous army besieged Carthage in the sixth century, his son Cartalo was returning from Tyre, *whither he had been sent by the Carthaginians, to carry the tenth of the plunder of Sicily, which his father had taken, to Hercules*; summoned by his father to the camp, he replied that *he would discharge his religious duties to the public, before those of merely private obligation*, and his father, though furious, dared not obstruct him. A young aristocrat, with his own father's army at the walls, treated the delivery of the tithe as an obligation that outranked a paternal summons — and the father agreed. That is what a binding obligation looks like from inside.

The robe cut for Greeks

There is a third audience and Carthage paid it in its own coin too, and the document survives.

In 215 Hannibal concluded an alliance with Philip V of Macedon. Polybius reproduces what he presents as its text, and the oath formula reads: *In the presence of Zeus, Hera, and Apollo: in the presence of the Genius of Carthage, of Heracles, and Iolaus: in the presence of Ares, Triton, and Poseidon: in the presence of the gods who battle for us and the Sun, Moon, and Earth; in the presence of Rivers, Lakes, and Waters: in the presence of all the gods who possess Macedonia and the rest of Greece: in the presence of all the gods of the army who preside over this oath.*

The Carthaginian state, swearing its most consequential treaty of the war, presented its own pantheon in Greek dress — Baal Hammon and Tanit as Zeus and Hera, Melqart as Heracles, and its triads preserved intact underneath the borrowed names. Some scholars doubt the document is verbatim; even so, the structure it preserves is Punic and the vocabulary is Greek, and that combination is the point. Legitimacy is borrowed from the currency the audience already honours, never minted; and here we can watch an apex do the conversion in a state instrument. Nothing in that is cynical. Neither party thought the other was worshipping different gods; both thought the gods had different names in different places, which is what most of the ancient Mediterranean thought.

What Carthage put on its money

The last audience is the one that most orders address hardest, and Carthage's treatment of it is the module's strangest finding.

Carthage minted no coinage at all for roughly the first four centuries of its existence — three hundred years after the Greek cities of Sicily had begun. When the mints finally opened, around 410, they opened **in Sicily, to pay soldiers**, and the coins say so. Alongside the city name Qart-hadasht, the legends read *mḥnt*, the Camp; *ʾm mḥnt*, the People of the Camp; and *mḥšbm*, the paymasters or quaestors. The images are a horse and a date palm — the horse of the foundation omen, and a tree that puns on the Greek word for Phoenician.

Set that beside what a Hellenistic king put on a coin in the same decades: his own portrait, diademed, with a divine attribute and a royal title. Carthage's most widely circulated public object carried no ruler, no dynasty, no accession formula and no claim of any kind about the right to govern. It carried a payroll heading. The one mass-produced state artefact this order made was addressed to its own hired and levied soldiers, and told them which account they were being paid from.

Reading the robe against the framework

Four things, and the third is the contribution.

The provenance was neither forged, redirected, nor inherited: it was imported. The framework names three ways an order acquires the trusted-information leg — manufacture a new authority, get behind one the people already trust, or destroy the incumbent and refill the vacancy. Carthage did none of these. It arrived carrying its gods, built their precinct within a generation of landing, ran the cult for its own population for six centuries, and never pointed it at the conquered. **Imported** should be added as a fourth provenance, with its own signature: it is cheap, because no persuasion is required and the trust is already installed; it is durable, because it travels with the population that holds it; and it is useless for governing anybody else, because it makes no claim on outsiders and offers them nothing. An imported robe explains a great deal about why this particular order had to be so expensive at its periphery.

The seam was captured rather than crowded, and captured by the same hands as the other two monopolies. The priesthoods were not a separate estate; the *rab* and the suffete and the priest were drawn from the same families, and one man could be several of these things. There was no Punic clerisy standing apart from the governing class, no scriptural tradition with independent authority, no prophetic office. The trusted-information position at Carthage was held by exactly the coalition that held the

wealth and commanded the armies. Module 9 will have to reckon with what that did to contestability, and the preliminary answer is: it removed one of the three legs a counterweight could have grown on.

Add the contractual robe to the tested/revealed axis, with arrears as its reading of failure. This is the module's chief addition to the framework and it is a real third position rather than a blend. A tested doctrine revises when the evidence defeats it; a revealed one reads defeat as insufficient faith; a contractual one reads defeat as an unpaid balance. The third is more resilient than either — no outcome can refute it — and its price rises with the danger rather than falling, which makes it superb at surviving small reverses and ruinous in a genuine crisis. And it carries the commutation finding with it: **the presence of a priced substitution in the liturgy is evidence that the obligation was believed, not that it was theatre**, because nobody negotiates the price of a debt he does not think he owes. The 310 sequence — evasion for generations, then the suspension of the evasion when the walls were threatened — is the clearest single illustration this corpus has of a belief that was real and cheated on at the same time, which is the ordinary condition of most people inside most religions and is very rarely visible in the record.

And the absence at the bottom is the loudest thing in the module. Carthage cut robes for its own citizens, for its Phoenician kinsmen across the sea, for Greek kings, and for its gods. It cut none for the Libyans who grew its food and filled its ranks. The framework says an order becomes cheap when the governed hold it up themselves, and that surveillance and force are the tell of a belief that never took. Here there was no belief to take, because none was ever offered — and the cost of that omission is not visible while the floor holds. It becomes visible all at once, in 241, when the men who had been given assessments instead of reasons discovered that they outnumbered the men who had given them.

A note on sources. The exact quotations are public-domain or primary epigraphic material. The standard Punic votive formula is given in transliteration and translation as reproduced in the reference literature on Phoenician votive inscriptions; the four-generation dedication of Hanno son of Gerashtart is quoted from the Penn Museum's publication of its Carthage stelae, with the editors' bracketed restorations left visible. The *mlk* and *mlk 'mr* terminology is drawn from the epigraphic corpus (CIS 307, KAI 61) as discussed in the specialist literature, principally Paul Mosca's study of *mulk* and its successors. Diodorus Siculus is quoted from the Loeb translation as reproduced at LacusCurtius, where the text is in the public domain: the tenth of public revenue formerly sent to Tyre, the allegation of substituted children, and the two hundred noble children sacrificed publicly with not less than three hundred volunteering (all

20.14). Diodorus wrote in the first century BC about 310 and is a single late and hostile witness; that is said in the body and the numbers are given as his rather than as counts. Justin's account of Cartalo carrying the tenth of the Sicilian plunder to Melqart at Tyre and refusing his father's summons is quoted from John Selby Watson's translation of *Epitome* 18.7, and rests on Justin alone. The oath formula of the Hannibal–Philip treaty is quoted from W. R. Paton's Loeb translation of Polybius 7.9; some scholars doubt that Polybius reproduces the document verbatim, and that doubt is stated in the body. The Punic coin legends — *mḥnt*, *'m mḥnt*, *mḥšbm*, Qart-hadasht — and the dating of the first Carthaginian mints to Sicily around 410 follow the standard numismatic literature, including Barclay Head's *Historia Numorum* and the modern series studies, paraphrased. The tophet's stratigraphy, extent and duration follow the excavation reports and the subsequent literature; the estimate of upwards of twenty thousand urns is the excavators' and is given as such. The osteological controversy is reported rather than adjudicated, with the positions attributed: Schwartz, Houghton, Bondioli and Macchiarelli (2010, 2012) for the reading of the precinct as a cemetery for perinatal deaths; Smith, Stager, Greene and Avishai (2011, 2013) for sacrifice on corrected age-distribution grounds; Xella, Quinn, Melchiorri and van Dommelen (2013) for sacrifice on epigraphic and contextual grounds. The characterisation that specialist opinion has moved back toward sacrifice without unanimity is the present writer's summary of that exchange and should be treated as such. The later diffusion of Baal Hammon and Tanit into the African interior as Saturn and Caelestis, and the disputed question of Libyan elements in Tanit, follow the standard accounts and are flagged in the body as a complication rather than resolved.

TWO SCRIPTS ON ONE STONE

Module 4 · formation — what a Carthaginian child was made into, what was never offered to a Libyan child, and why the population Carthage declined to form did not stay unformed but acquired Carthage's own script, magistracies and gods, and eventually used them

Formation is the most powerful instrument a durable order has, and it works by timing. What is installed in a child before his vigilance matures does not arrive as a proposal he might weigh; it arrives as the ground he will later do his weighing on. It hands him his framework for seeing the world — who his natural authorities are, which sources are to be trusted, who counts as his people, what is sacred and therefore not to be calculated at all — and it does this before he is in any position to refuse. The rest of a life then gets built on top, so that revising the foundation later feels less like changing a belief than like demolishing oneself.

At Carthage the first piece of this was installed at the moment a child was named, and it is worth pausing on because it is so nearly invisible.

Punic personal names are overwhelmingly theophoric, and not decoratively so — they are complete sentences about a god's relation to the bearer. Ḥanniba'al, the name of the most famous man this civilisation produced, means *Baal is gracious*. His brother 'Azruba'al, Hasdrubal, means *Baal helps*. Their father Ḥamilqart is *Melqart's brother* or *Melqart's servant*, depending on which reading one takes. Abdmelqart is *servant of Melqart*; Bodashtart, *from the hand of Astarte*; Eshmuniaton, *Eshmun has given*; Melqartshama', *Melqart has heard* — which is the votive formula of the stelae compressed into a man's name. And the names ran in strings: a Carthaginian was not Hanno but Hanno son of Gerashtart son of Himilkot son of Eshmun-something, so that saying who he was recited, every time, both his descent and the gods his household had been paying for four generations.

Set that beside the levers formation actually works. Coalitional belonging: the name says whose you are, in a line of named men. The deference heuristic: the name says which powers stand above you. The sacred: the name is a statement about a god's disposition toward you personally, not a proposition anyone offers to argue. And the timing is absolute, because nobody chooses his own name. Before a Carthaginian child could form a single view about anything, the most-used word in his life had told him what the world contained and where he stood in it.

Formation as routine

What followed was not doctrine but practice, and the surviving evidence is unusually good on exactly this point because Punic religion left prices behind.

A limestone tablet found at Marseille in 1845, and shown by chemical analysis of the stone to have come from Carthage, is a schedule of fees at the temple of Baal Saphon, set up around the middle of the third century *in the time of Ḥilleṣba'al the suffet son of Bodtinnit son of Bodesmun … [and Ḥilleṣba'al] the suffet son of Bodesmun son of Ḥilleṣba'al and their colleagues*, by a board of thirty men in charge of fees. It works through the animals in order — ox, calf, ram, goat, lamb, kid, deer, bird — and for each one states in shekels what the priest receives and what remains to the man who brought it, then does the same for offerings of flour, oil, milk and fat. And it closes with enforcement running in both directions: *Any priest who takes a fee against what is set in this tablet shall be fined*, and an offerer who withholds what is due is likewise liable. Several more fragments of the same genre have been found at Carthage itself.

Read as a formative instrument, this is remarkable. A Carthaginian child learned the cult the way he learned market prices, from a published tariff cut in stone in a public sanctuary — and he learned at the same time that the priest could be fined for overcharging him. Whatever else it produced, this is not a formation that installs a caste of unaccountable interpreters. It installs a relationship with the gods that is administered, itemised, appealable, and identical in structure to the commercial life the same child would enter.

The other great formative environment was the precinct north of the harbour. Its material has been examined already for what it says about belief; here what matters is what it did to a child growing up beside it. He walked past thousands of stelae bearing his neighbours' names and his own family's, each recording a vow made and discharged. One striking fact about the record makes the point better than any argument: this single precinct has produced more than ninety per cent of the entire surviving Phoenician-Punic epigraphic corpus. Where this civilisation wrote things down permanently, in public, for its own people to read, it wrote them there. The precinct was the place where the city put its names.

Two further institutions can be glimpsed. Aristotle's informants told him that Carthage had messes: *The common tables of the clubs answer to the Spartan phiditia* — dining associations, usually identified with the Semitic *marzeaḥ*, into which a young man was admitted and in which he ate with named men for the rest of his life. And the year was scored by festival. A carefully cut marble stele of the fourth or third century preserves part of a liturgy running at least five days, with its sections labelled *on the fourth day* and *on the fifth day*; and once a year, at the *egersis* — the awakening of

Melqart — a Carthaginian delegation crossed the sea to Tyre to sacrifice at the temple of a city Carthage had long outgrown.

The honest limit must be stated: we cannot reconstruct the Punic calendar. The month names survive patchily, most festivals are unknown, and no Carthaginian school is attested anywhere. Learning appears to have happened in households, temples, workshops, shipyards and scribal offices rather than in an institution with pupils and stages. But literacy was not confined to a priesthood — the thousands of stelae were commissioned by ordinary people who wanted their names and their fathers' names cut correctly — and that is itself a formation fact.

The good member, and the subject who was never drawn

The framework asks every study to reconstruct the portrait of the good subject. Carthage returns something odd: a very sharp portrait of the good *member*, and no portrait of a subject at all.

Take what a Carthaginian chose to have cut on stone about himself when he had one chance to say who he was. He recorded that he had vowed and paid — and then, if he could, that his father had been a *rab* and his grandfather a suffete. That is the whole self-portrait. Not courage, not learning, not piety in the ascetic sense, not service. Paid, and of a family that held office. When a young aristocrat had to choose between his own father's summons and the delivery of the city's tithe to Melqart, the answer he gave — that he would discharge his public religious duty before a merely private one — is a formed man's answer, and his father, though furious, could not gainsay it.

Now look for the corresponding picture of a good Libyan, and there is none. No Carthaginian text tells the cultivator of the Bagradas what he ought to be. No cult was sent inland to make him a worshipper of Baal Hammon on Carthaginian terms. No school taught him Punic in order to make him useful. No ladder ran from his village to any position at the centre; the Libyphoenician towns supplied soldiers by law and their men were not thereby made Carthaginians. What he was told was his assessment.

The reason is structural and it is worth stating without euphemism, because it is the same reason that operated in the modern colonial cases. **To form a man is to admit him.** A population taught to see the order's authorities as its own natural authorities, its gods as its own gods, its story as its own story, will in due course ask for the standing that goes with all that — and it will ask in the order's own vocabulary, which is the hardest kind of demand to refuse. Carthage could not afford the question. Its settlement ran on a specific arithmetic: entry to the governing class by money, the money recouped from the provinces, and the poorer citizens pacified by being sent out to grow rich on the subject towns. Every part of that depended on the subjects staying

outside. **The instrument that bought internal peace was the instrument that made forming the subjects impossible**, and the impossibility was not an oversight but a load-bearing feature.

There is no unformed person

Here the framework's own premise has to be held firmly, because dropping it produces exactly the wrong reading of what follows.

The seat of trusted belief in a person cannot be emptied. It can only be occupied — by one tenant or another, better or worse. To be unformed is not to be free and open; it is to be feral, and nobody is. A child deprived of one set of trusted authorities does not grow up without any; he acquires others, because knowing anything at all in a world he cannot personally verify requires taking almost all of it on the word of somebody. Seeing through a formation is real and common; getting out of formation altogether is not a thing that happens.

So the conqueror who withholds his formation has not created a blank. He has left the incumbent in possession. The formation that was running before he arrived goes on running, and the population he declined to make his own gets made into something by somebody else — and in the fullness of time that becomes his problem. This is what happened in British Kenya, where the settlers would not form Africans as Englishmen because forming them would have meant admitting them, educated a thin cadre of clerks and chiefs instead, and discovered two generations later that the order they had refused to displace was still there, intact, and now organised.

Carthage is the same operation on a longer baseline, and it produced a third outcome that the corpus has not seen before.

What actually formed a Libyan child

Two things did, and they compounded.

The first is the incumbent. Carthage conquered the plain but did not dismantle it. It did not deport the population, did not sell the villages, did not break the descent groups, did not replace the language. It taxed. So the Libyan child was formed as Libyan children had been formed before the Tyrians landed — by lineage, locality, the elders, and a language that had its own script. Something like a thousand Libyco-Berber inscriptions survive from across North Africa, and the language that carried them became the Numidian of the kings and, through its descendants, is spoken still. That is withhold-and-preserve, and the incumbent held the field exactly as the framework predicts.

The second is the leak, and this is the module's finding.

Carthage was not sealed. The Libyan served in its armies, sold into its markets, was garrisoned and assessed by its officers, and lived within a day's ride of towns full of Punic-speakers. Under those conditions the *forms* travelled even though the *admission* never did — and by the second century the results are visible in stone.

At Dougga, in the Numidian interior, a monument was raised to Masinissa in the tenth year of his successor Micipsa, in 139 or 138. Its dedication is cut twice: once in the Libyan alphabet and once in Punic, side by side on one stone. The Numidian chancery ran bilingually, issuing documents in both. Numidian towns had *shofets* — the Carthaginian magistracy, the office Aristotle had compared to a Spartan king — and Gabriel Camps observed that Punic shofets were still in place in several African cities, Dougga among them, well into the Roman period. Numidian kings cut inscriptions in Punic. And the gods went inland too: the divine couple of the tophet reappears across the interior in Roman times as Saturn and Caelestis, worshipped by Berber-descended populations for centuries after Carthage was rubble.

The language outlasted everything. Augustine, bishop of Hippo four and a half centuries after the destruction, refers to Punic some twenty-one times as a living tongue with monolingual speakers in the countryside of his own diocese, remarks that a great deal had been wisely preserved in books written in it, and notes approvingly that Punic-speaking Christians called baptism simply *salvation*. His much-quoted line that the country people, asked what they were, answered *Chanani* is genuinely contested — the manuscript reading has been challenged, and Josephine Quinn has argued that the identification is Augustine's learned optimism rather than his peasants' self-description — so it should not be leaned on. What is not contested is the language. Punic was still being spoken in the African countryside around the year 400.

So the Libyan child was formed, thoroughly, by an order that was partly his own and increasingly Punic in idiom. What emerged was not a vacuum, and not a sealed aboriginal survival either. It was a third thing: a population, and above all an elite, competent in Carthage's script, offices, gods and administrative language, and owing Carthage nothing whatever.

The test

The framework asks what the base population actually *did* when the order's authority was put to a determination, because conduct under test is the only evidence about conviction that does not require mind-reading. Carthage supplies two answers, one for each side of the line, and they could hardly be further apart.

At the centre, formation took, and took hard. In 310, with the enemy encamped outside the walls and the city's arrears to the gods diagnosed, not fewer than three hundred men under suspicion of having evaded the obligation gave up their own children voluntarily. In 149 the Roman consuls, having taken the city's weapons by treaty, ordered the population to abandon the site and resettle inland; Carthage refused, and stood a three-year siege that ended in street fighting through six-storey houses. Whatever one makes of either episode, these are not populations complying because a garrison is watching. They are populations holding the order up themselves at the maximum available price.

At the periphery, the answer came in 241, and it is unambiguous. The mutiny began as a pay dispute among some twenty thousand demobilised soldiers. Its leader was a man named Mathos — a Libyan from Carthage's own African possessions, recruited into the Carthaginian army, holding a junior commission in it. He sent word to the African settlements that a formed, experienced, anti-Carthaginian army now existed in the middle of Carthaginian territory, and the settlements rose. Polybius puts the reinforcements that came in at seventy thousand, with provisions and money; almost the whole of Carthaginian Africa joined. Two and a half centuries of assessment without a single reason offered had produced a population that, the moment a coordinating instrument appeared, used it.

And note precisely where the instrument came from. The Libyans could rise on that scale because they were already trained, already organised in units, already accustomed to standing in a line — because Carthage had conscripted rather than disarmed them. They could coordinate with the mutineers because Carthage had put them in the same camps. The man who led them held his rank from Carthage. Every capability that made the rising dangerous had been installed by the order it was aimed at.

The discipline still applies, and it should be stated rather than softened. The rising did not change the settlement. It ended in the employer's total victory, Spendius and his officers crucified in view of Tunis, Mathos tortured to death in a Carthaginian triumph, the towns retaken. Structural change comes from within the hierarchy, and this did not come from within it. What a rising of this kind reliably does is change the price of a policy, and it did that permanently: within three years of its suppression Carthage was building a new revenue base in Spain, and it never again drew from Africa without garrisoning against the memory.

Reading formation against the framework

One correction restated, and one addition.

The premise first, because everything depends on it. There is no unformed person. The seat of trusted belief cannot be vacated, only occupied. When a conqueror withholds formation from a population — as Carthage withheld it, as Britain withheld it in Kenya, and for the same reason, that forming a man means admitting him — he does not produce a blank population waiting to be written on later. He leaves the incumbent formation in possession, and the incumbent goes on doing what formation does: telling that population who its natural authorities are, who its people are, and what is not up for negotiation. The population gets formed. It simply does not get formed by him.

The addition is a third case, and Carthage is its specimen. The corpus already holds two. *Withhold and preserve* — leave the transmitting apparatus standing, as in Kenya — and the old order holds the field: the excluded remain legible to themselves and illegible to the ruler. *Withhold and destroy* — break the apparatus, as happened to the Sicels in Sicily — and the old order dies, and something else fills the vacancy, because the vacancy always fills.

Carthage shows a third: **withhold the admission, preserve the apparatus, and saturate the environment with your own forms anyway.** This is what happens when a conqueror rules at close quarters for centuries without sealing himself off — conscripting, garrisoning, trading, employing — while refusing to extend membership. The subject population then acquires the ruler's script, his magistracies, his administrative language and eventually his gods, and acquires none of his claims on it. What that produces is not a preserved native order and not a docile imitation. It is a **counter-elite formed in the conqueror's own idiom**: legible to itself, capable in his vocabulary, able to operate his machinery, and bound to him by nothing at all. Of the three outcomes this is the most dangerous to the ruler, because the other two leave him facing either a stranger or a ruin, and this one leaves him facing a competent rival who learned the trade from him.

The specimens are not hypothetical and they arrive in order. Mathos in 241, a Libyan officer of the Carthaginian army who turned Carthage's own military organisation against it and nearly finished the state. Then Masinissa: a Massylian prince raised in and around Carthage, who campaigned in Carthaginian armies in Spain, defected in 206, unified Numidia under Roman patronage, ran a bilingual chancery, built a Punic-shaped kingdom with Punic-titled magistrates, spent fifty years taking Carthaginian territory a district at a time, and finally provoked the war that ended the city. The monument his son raised him at Dougga carries the two scripts on one stone. That object is the whole of this module: Carthage's alphabet, in the hands of the man who buried Carthage, honouring a king Carthage had made and could never admit.

And the corollary explains why an order does this to itself anyway. Formation and admission are the same act, so an order whose revenue depends on extracting from the unformed cannot form them without dissolving the revenue. Carthage's panacea — seating its poorer citizens on the subject towns and letting them grow rich there — was precisely what made the subjects unformable, because every citizen enriched abroad was a citizen whose position required that the people around him stay outside. The mechanism that bought two centuries of internal peace foreclosed the only durable answer to the danger it was accumulating. That is not a moral about Carthaginian cruelty. It is the arithmetic of the position, and any set of men standing where they stood would have found the same numbers.

A note on sources. The exact quotations are public-domain or primary epigraphic material. The Marseille/Carthage sacrificial tariff is quoted in the English of the translation reproduced at Attalus (after E. Lupu, 2009), from KAI 69 / CIS I 165, dated on epigraphic grounds to roughly 300–250; the chemical analysis identifying the stone's origin as Carthage, and the parallel fragments from Carthage itself (KAI 74 and others), follow the standard epigraphic literature. Aristotle on the common tables of the clubs is quoted from Benjamin Jowett's translation of *Politics* 2.11. The Punic votive naming pattern and the meanings of the theophoric elements follow the standard onomastic literature and are paraphrased; individual name meanings (Hannibal, Hasdrubal, Hamilcar, Abdmelqart, Bodashtart, Melqartshama') are given as that literature gives them, and the reading of Hamilcar as "brother" or "servant" of Melqart is disputed and flagged. The Carthage Festival inscription (KAI 76), with its labels for the fourth and fifth days, is reported from the published editions. Justin's account of Cartalo preferring public religious duty to a father's summons is from Watson's translation of *Epitome* 18.7 and rests on Justin alone. The statement that the tophet precinct has produced more than ninety per cent of the surviving Phoenician-Punic epigraphic corpus is the estimate of specialists working on that corpus and is given as theirs. The Dougga bilingual honouring Masinissa in the tenth year of Micipsa (139/8; RIL 2, KAI 101), the bilingual Numidian chancery, and the survival of Punic *shofets* in African towns into the Roman period follow the standard accounts, the last after Gabriel Camps; the debate over whether Dougga in this period is better read as Punic-influenced or as increasingly Berber is live and is noted rather than resolved. Augustine's testimony to spoken Punic around 400 is drawn from his letters and commentaries as collected in the modern discussions; the *Chanani* passage is expressly flagged as contested, following Josephine Quinn's argument and the manuscript question raised against the standard editions, and no weight is placed on it. Polybius' figure of seventy thousand African reinforcements in 241, and the identification of

Mathos as a Libyan from Carthage's African territories serving in its army, are from *Histories* 1.67 and following, reported here from the standard summaries of that passage; the figure is Polybius' and is given as his rather than as a count. The absence of any attested Carthaginian school, and the characterisation of Punic learning as taking place in households, temples, workshops and scribal offices rather than in a staged curriculum, follows the recent scholarship on learning environments in pre-Roman North Africa and is stated in the body as a limit on the evidence.

THEY SCATTERED TO THEIR NATIVE LANDS

Module 5 · the cost column — why the ordinary man complied, run separately for the Carthaginian of small means, the townsman of Utica and the Libyan cultivator, because the same order gave three different answers

An order stands because, every morning, a very large number of ordinary people who are not obliged to do so by anyone standing over them decide that going along with it is better than the alternative. That decision has two columns. On the benefit side: what the arrangement actually gives a man, and — quite separately — whether he holds it to be right, which is worth something in itself and can carry a great deal of weight where the material return is thin. On the cost side: what will be done to him if he does not comply, by the state's arm and by his own neighbours, and whether he could simply leave instead.

Where the benefit is real and the belief is deep, the state need inflict very little; the arrangement runs on its own. Where both are thin, the state must inflict a great deal, permanently, and the bill never stops. That is the gradient this collection runs on, and the important thing about Carthage is that it sat at both ends of it at once. A citizen living on the Byrsa and a cultivator in the Bagradas forty miles inland were held in place by almost entirely different mechanisms — and a third man, in Utica, sat between them and moved. So this module runs the ledger three times.

The Carthaginian of small means

Start with the man whose ledger was genuinely positive, because the collection more often meets the other kind.

The best evidence is a street. Excavating beneath the later Roman forum on the Byrsa, Serge Lancel uncovered a residential quarter of the early second century that had survived by accident, buried under the embankments the Romans laid for their own civic centre. It is laid out on a grid, with straight streets about six metres wide and clay road surfaces, and stairs cut into the roadway where the hill is steep. The houses front the street with a room that could serve as a shop; behind it a corridor runs to a central courtyard with a cesspool, with small rooms around it, and beneath the house an

underground cistern. They rose several storeys. And the excavators are explicit that this was not an elite quarter: it belonged to ordinary merchants and public officials.

Sit with that for a moment, because it is the plainest thing in this study. An ordinary Carthaginian family in the second century lived on a planned street, in a multi-storey house, with its own water storage and its own drainage. Almost nobody in the ancient Mediterranean lived like that. Whatever else the arrangement was doing, it was delivering.

The rest of the benefit column runs the same way. If the fleet was substantially citizen-manned — an inference from its size and skill rather than an attested fact, and it should be held at that confidence — then the state was the largest employer of poor citizens in the city, and a man's living came from the same institution that governed him. Above that sat the mechanism Aristotle identified and disapproved of: the Carthaginians escaped the ordinary miseries of oligarchy by enriching one portion of the common people after another and sending them out to the dependencies, which he called *their panacea and the means by which they give stability to the state*. A poor Carthaginian's route to property ran through a posting, and the postings kept coming.

Then security, which is the largest single good any state supplies and which Carthage supplied continuously for longer than almost any city in the record. Between the foundation and 146 the city was never taken. Agathocles reached the walls in 310; Regulus took Tunis in 256; Mathos besieged it in 240; the Numidians raided the countryside repeatedly. Nobody got in. Six centuries of that is not an abstraction to a family with children.

And there was voice. Aristotle records that when the suffetes and the council of elders were unanimous they could decide whether to put a matter to the people at all, but when they disagreed the matter went to the assembly — and there, he says, whatever they bring before the people *is not only heard but also determined by them, and any one who likes may oppose it; now this is not permitted in Sparta and Crete*. Whatever this amounted to in practice, it is a reserve power that a Spartan did not have, held by a man whose house had a cistern in it.

Now the cost column for the same man, and its emptiness is the point. There was no garrison holding down the citizens of Carthage. No political police. No pass, no register, no internal frontier, no surveillance organ of any kind appears anywhere in the record. What punishment the sources do report falls almost entirely on generals and senators. The order held its own citizens at a cost approaching zero.

The test came in 149. The consuls, having already taken the city's weapons and artillery by treaty, ordered the population to abandon the site and resettle ten miles inland. The city refused, rearmed itself from nothing, and stood a siege of three years

that ended in street fighting through six-storey houses. That is not compliance purchased by fear. That is what a full benefit column buys when it is finally called.

The townsman of Utica

The middle case is the most instructive, because it is the one that moved.

The old Phoenician towns of Africa — Utica, Hadrumetum, Hippo, Leptis — kept their own institutions and magistrates, shared Carthage's language, gods and script, and traded inside its system. Utica's standing was formal enough that the treaty with Rome of 348 names the parties as *the Romans and their allies, and the Carthaginians, Tyrians, and township of Utica*: a contracting party, not a possession. Against that: contributions, and, by the third century, the fact that the Libyphoenician communities were the only group under Carthaginian rule legally obliged to supply soldiers to the metropolis — an obligation the citizens of Carthage did not carry.

So the ledger was positive but not by a wide margin, and we can watch it change sign. In 241, when Mathos sent word to the African settlements and almost the whole of Carthaginian Africa rose, Utica and Hippo refused, and the rebels besieged them for it. A century later, in 149, Utica went over to Rome before the war began, and the Roman fleet used its harbour. The same town, the same relationship, holding in one crisis and defecting in the next.

That is a dated movement in a cost-benefit column and it should be recorded as such. What changed between 241 and 149 was not Carthaginian severity toward Utica but the arithmetic on the other side: in 241 the alternative was a rebel army with no future, and in 149 it was Rome. **A cost column is always relative to what else is on offer, and a client's loyalty is repriced by the arrival of a better patron rather than by anything the old one does.**

The Libyan cultivator

Now the man the order was actually built on.

Be fair about his benefit column, because it is not empty. The plain under Carthaginian control was not raided while Carthage held it, and Numidian raiding was a real and recurring danger that the arrangement suppressed. There were markets to sell into, and a currency, and roads of a kind. And the agricultural knowledge ran in both directions: Mago's treatise, which Rome thought worth preserving above every other Punic book, incorporated Libyan practice as well as Phoenician, so the countryside was not merely being drained of technique.

Against that: Polybius reports that during the First Punic War half the crop was taken from the Libyans and the tribute due from the towns was doubled, and the peacetime rate is reconstructed by most scholars at around a quarter. He adds the judgement of the Carthaginian political class on its own administrators — that they esteemed not the governor who dealt moderately with the subjects but the one who brought in the most and handled the inhabitants hardest. Beyond the assessment came the levy of men, and beyond that nothing: no citizenship, no route into the settlement, no ladder for a clever son, and — as the previous module established — not one word offered to him about why any of it was right.

So the benefit column is thin and the belief column is empty, because nobody ever filled it. The framework's proposition follows without adjustment: where both are thin, the cost column must be held high by visible force, permanently. And that is what the African interior got. Garrisoned towns, resident officers, tribute collectors, and a selection process at the top that rewarded the harshest of them.

Could he leave?

The exit dial decides more about an ordinary man's ledger than any other single variable, and Carthage turned it in an unusual way.

Look first at the map. The plain is bounded by the sea to the north and east and by the desert margin to the south. Westward lies open country, and there was no Carthaginian law against Libyan flight anywhere in the record — no register, no pass, no statute binding a cultivator to his fields. On the face of it the door stood open.

But an exit is worth what lies on the other side of it, and here the answer changes across the centuries in a way that is itself a finding. In the sixth century a Libyan walking west walked into a world of independent communities. By the third he walked into the Numidian kingdoms — and those kingdoms were Carthaginian clients, bound by subsidy and by cavalry contracts, ruled increasingly by men running Punic-shaped administrations with Punic-titled magistrates. The Massylian king was Carthage's ally, and a fugitive arriving in his country arrived in a place that had every reason to hand him back.

That is the mechanism, and it is cheaper than any law: **Carthage did not close the door; it acquired the next room.** By turning its neighbours into clients it converted the whole reachable exit zone into an extension of the same arrangement, which is a far less visible instrument than a frontier guard and works on everyone at once.

What remained was the desert margin, which was a genuine exit and an extremely expensive one, because leaving the arrangement meant leaving agriculture — abandoning the fields that made a man a cultivator and becoming something else on

worse ground. And this yields the distinction the module needs: **individual exit was available and collective exit was not.** A man could go. A village could not, because a village *is* its fields, and the whole population of the Bagradas could not have picked up its harvest and walked. So exit functioned as a safety valve for individuals and not at all as a constraint on the extractor, which is exactly the configuration that lets an assessment be pushed toward the bone.

The second enforcer, and which way it faced

The state's arm is only one of the two things that hold a cost column up. The other is the community — the neighbours who punish a deviant for free, unpaid and unordered, and who between them do more to keep an order standing than any garrison.

For the Carthaginian this enforcer was working at full strength. The dining clubs Aristotle compared to the Spartan messes bound a man to a body of named men for life. The precinct made compliance *legible*: a man who had discharged his vow had his name cut in stone where everybody could read it, and everybody could also see whose name was not there. A published sacrificial tariff, with a penalty for a priest who overcharged and a penalty for an offerer who withheld, made the obligation a matter of public record and public reckoning. None of this cost the state anything, and all of it pressed in one direction.

For the Libyan it pressed in the other, and this is the sharpest structural point in the module. His neighbours were not enforcing the Carthaginian arrangement, because they had never been formed to it. They were the people he shared a grievance with. In his village, the man who deviated was the one who collected for Carthage, and the free, unpaid, unordered community punishment fell on *him*.

State it as a finding, because it follows directly from the decision not to form the subject population and it is a cost that arrives with a long delay. **Where formation is withheld, the community enforcer does not merely go missing. It reverses.** An order that declines to form its subjects does not simply lose the benefit of neighbourly self-policing; it acquires a countervailing version of the same machinery, running at the same zero cost, aimed at itself. That is why an unformed subject population is more expensive than the plain absence of belief would predict, and why the price rises rather than falling as the generations pass.

What actually held it

So why did the Libyan comply for four hundred years?

Not because he thought it right; nothing was ever said to him. Not because the return was good; a quarter of the crop is not a good return. Not, exactly, because he could not leave; he could, individually, and the fact that most did not tells us mainly that a man does not abandon his fields lightly.

The answer is in Diodorus' account of 396, and it is worth having in full because it is the closest thing this study has to a controlled experiment on the Libyan cost column.

That year a Carthaginian army in Sicily was destroyed by plague and its general abandoned his own troops. *When the news of the Carthaginian disaster had spread throughout Libya, their allies, who had long hated the oppressive rule of the Carthaginians and even more at this time because of the betrayal of the soldiers at Syracuse, were inflamed against them.* They sent messages to one another, gathered, and camped in the open; *since they were speedily joined not only by freemen but also by slaves, there was gathered in a short time a body of two hundred thousand men. Seizing Tynes, a city situated not far from Carthage, they based their line of battle on it, and since they had the better of the fighting, they confined the Phoenicians within their walls.*

Two hundred thousand is Diodorus' figure and not a count, and it should be read as meaning *effectively the whole countryside*. But note what it establishes beyond any argument about numbers: the Libyan population had already decided, in 396, that the price of defiance was worth paying. The cost column was not what held them. They rose, they won the field, and they penned Carthage inside its own walls.

And then the passage tells us why it did not matter. *Furthermore, they quarrelled among themselves over the supreme command and some of them were bought off with Carthaginian money and deserted the common cause. As a result, both because of the lack of provisions and because of treachery on the part of some, they broke up and scattered to their native lands, thus relieving the Carthaginians of the greatest fear.*

There is the mechanism, stated by a hostile source without any interest in flattering the Libyans or the Carthaginians. What held the arrangement was not that the ruled thought the price too high. It was that they could not stay together: no standing command, no treasury, no supply, no institution that outlived the moment of anger — against an opponent with money to spend on their leaders and walls to sit behind while they starved.

This wants stating as a refinement to the framework, because it changes what a study should look for. **For a subject population with an empty benefit column and no installed belief, the operative variable is not the credibility of punishment but the cost of coordination.** Such a population is not deterred; it is merely unassembled. And the test of that proposition is available, because Carthaginian Africa rose twice in

a way that nearly succeeded, and on both occasions somebody else supplied the missing half. In 396 it was the collapse of a Carthaginian army abroad and a Syracusan war that pinned the state's attention elsewhere. In 241 it was a mutinous professional army that arrived in the middle of Carthaginian territory with officers, a command structure, and a treasury seized from Gisco — and Mathos's message to the settlements said exactly that, that a formed and experienced anti-Carthaginian army now existed in the heart of the country. The Libyans supplied the numbers, as they always could. What they had never had before was a general staff.

Hold the discipline about the outcome. The 241 rising ended in the employer's complete victory: the rebel field army massacred at the Saw, its leaders crucified in sight of Tunis, Mathos tortured to death, the towns retaken one by one. The settlement did not move by a single acre. Structural change comes from inside the hierarchy, and this came from outside it. What the risings did — reliably, both times — was reprice the arrangement: after 396 Carthage imported a Greek cult to settle its account with heaven, and after 241 it went to Spain to find a revenue base that did not depend on African goodwill.

Reading the cost column against the framework

Four things, and the second and fourth are the ones to carry.

The cheap pole can be reached through the benefit column rather than through belief. At its core Carthage was as cheap as any order in this collection — no garrison, no political police, no register, no surveillance — and the collection's usual reading of such quiet is a thick robe deeply installed. That reading is wrong here. There was no Punic doctrine telling the citizen that the arrangement was just; the robe, as the previous modules found, was contractual and addressed to gods and kinsmen rather than to subjects. What filled the benefit column was material and specific: a cistern under the house, a drain out of it, a wage from the fleet, a posting that made a poor man rich, six centuries without a sack, and a vote when the magistrates fell out. The refinement: **ask which column is full before assuming the belief is,** because from the outside a population that thinks the order is *paying* is indistinguishable from one that thinks it is *right* — until the payments stop, when the two come apart very fast.

Where formation is withheld, the community enforcer reverses. This is the delayed bill for the decision examined in the previous module, and it is larger than the absence of belief alone would suggest. An order that will not form its subjects loses free self-policing and acquires free counter-policing in the same motion, and the countervailing machinery runs on the same zero budget as the machinery it replaces.

Exit can be closed without a law, by making the neighbours clients. Carthage never legislated against flight. It did the cheaper thing and turned every reachable destination into a place that owed it something, so that the door stayed open onto a room it also owned. The refinement for the exit dial is to **measure not whether a door exists but what stands on the other side — and to treat a patron's clients as an extension of the patron's territory for exit purposes.** With the corollary that decides the extraction rate: individual exit was available and collective exit was not, and where that is true the assessment can be driven down toward the bone without emptying the fields.

And for the unformed, unbenefited subject, the binding constraint is coordination cost, not deterrence. This is the module's main contribution and it changes the research question. The framework asks why the ledger comes out against revolt, and the implied answer is that a credible enforcer prices defection too high. Carthage shows a population for whom that was simply not true: in 396 two hundred thousand of them, free and slave together, had already priced defection and found it acceptable, and they beat the Carthaginian field force and shut the state inside its walls. They lost because they could not feed themselves, could not agree on a commander, and could be bought at the top — and then, in Diodorus' flat phrase, they broke up and scattered to their native lands. **A subject population held down this way is not deterred. It is unassembled, and it stays unassembled only until somebody supplies the assembly.** The corollary is uncomfortable and worth stating: an order in this position is stable exactly as long as nobody hands its subjects an organisation, which means its survival depends on a variable it does not control. Carthage controlled it for two centuries by keeping its wars abroad. In 241 it brought its own army home unpaid, and handed them one.

A note on sources. The exact quotations are public-domain primary material. Diodorus Siculus on the Libyan rising of 396 — the allies who had long hated the oppressive rule, the two hundred thousand freemen and slaves, the seizure of Tynes and the confinement of the Carthaginians within their walls, and the collapse of the rising through quarrels over the command, bribery, and lack of provisions — is quoted from the Loeb translation of 14.77.1–3 as reproduced in the Perseus text. Diodorus wrote in the first century BC about events of 396 and his figure of two hundred thousand is a marker of scale rather than a count; that is said in the body. Aristotle on the panacea of sending out portions of the people to the dependencies, and on the assembly's power to determine matters on which the suffetes and elders disagree with any citizen free to oppose, is quoted from Benjamin Jowett's translation of *Politics* 2.11. The clause of the Roman treaty of 348 naming the township of Utica as a party is quoted from Evelyn

Shuckburgh's translation of Polybius 3.24. Polybius on the wartime exaction of half the crop and the doubling of the towns' tribute, and on the Carthaginian preference for the harshest governors, is from *Histories* 1.72 and is reported and paraphrased here rather than quoted, since the wording available to me is secondary; the reconstructed peacetime rate of about one quarter is a modern inference and is given as such. The Byrsa residential quarter — the orthogonal grid, the six-metre streets with clay surfaces and cut stairs, the shop-front rooms, the underground cisterns, the courtyards with cesspools, and the excavators' judgement that the quarter belonged to ordinary merchants and officials rather than to the elite — follows Serge Lancel's excavation reports and the subsequent literature, paraphrased. The inference that the fleet was substantially citizen-manned is flagged in the body as an inference. The refusal of Utica and Hippo to join the rising of 241, their siege by the rebels, and Utica's defection to Rome in 149 follow the standard accounts drawing on Polybius and Appian. Mathos's message to the African settlements, the seizure of Gisco's treasury, the figure of seventy thousand African reinforcements, and the suppression of the rising at the Saw and Leptis Parva are from Polybius 1.67–88, reported from the standard summaries of those chapters. The absence from the record of any Carthaginian law restricting the movement of Libyans, of any internal register, and of any political police is an argument from silence and is stated as one; the Carthaginian archive was destroyed in 146 and the surviving Punic epigraphy is overwhelmingly votive.

NO TAX FALLING ON INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS

Module 6 · extraction — what was taken, from whom, through whose hands, and what happened in 196 when one man audited the accounts and told the assembly what he had found

In 196, five years after Zama, the Carthaginians elected Hannibal suffete. The state was carrying an indemnity of ten thousand talents payable to Rome over fifty years, it had lost Spain, Sicily, Sardinia and its fleet, and it could not find the money for the annual instalment. Livy describes the position he inherited: *The public revenues were being frittered away, partly through careless management and partly through being fraudulently appropriated by some of the political leaders and superior magistrates. The result was that there was not money enough to meet the annual payment of the indemnity to Rome, and there seemed every likelihood of a heavy tax being imposed upon the individual citizens.*

So he audited it. *When Hannibal had informed himself as to the amount of the national income from all sources, the objects for which calls upon it were made, what proportion was absorbed by the regular needs of the State and how much had been embezzled, he stated publicly in the assembly that if the balance were called up the government would be rich enough to meet the demands of Rome without any tax falling on individual citizens. And he was as good as his word.*

Everything this module needs to establish is contained in those two passages, and it is worth setting out before going further. There was a large ordinary revenue. It was large enough, even after the loss of the empire, to carry two hundred talents a year to Rome on top of the running costs of the state. It did not come from the citizens of Carthage — and the prospect that it might have to was a political emergency, which is why averting it made Hannibal briefly the most popular man in the city. And the men who administered it were stealing it.

What happened next is the module's other half, and it is deferred to the end.

Four streams, none of them domestic

Carthaginian revenue came from four directions and it is worth taking them in order, because their common feature is the finding.

The land. The African assessment is the largest and least visible stream. Polybius reports that during the First Punic War half the crop was taken from the Libyan cultivators and the tribute owed by the subject towns was doubled; the ordinary peacetime rate is reconstructed by most scholars at around a quarter, which is among the heaviest agrarian exactions this collection has measured anywhere. It was assessed on communities rather than on individuals, collected by resident Carthaginian officers, and enforced by garrisons. And it was collected by men whose standing at home depended on the total: Polybius says plainly that the Carthaginians honoured not the governor who dealt moderately with the subjects but the one who delivered most and handled the inhabitants hardest.

The sea. Customs were levied on goods entering by land and by sea, and by the evidence of what Hannibal was later able to recover by reforming their administration, they were substantial. The instruments that protected them survive. The treaty with Rome of 509 stipulates that beyond the Fair Promontory Roman ships may not sail at all, and that traders *may conclude no business except in the presence of a herald or town-clerk, and the price of whatever is sold in the presence of such shall be secured to the vendor by the state, if the sale take place in Libya or Sardinia*. That clause is usually read as a merchant's protection, and it is one. Read from the treasury's side it is also a chokepoint: a state officer present at every transaction is a state officer in a position to assess it. Alongside this ran the exclusion of foreign shipping from whole zones of the western sea, which is a monopoly rent by another name, and the treaties with the Etruscans that Aristotle knew, specifying what might and might not be imported.

The mines. From the 230s the Barcid conquest of Spain gave Carthage the richest silver deposits in the western Mediterranean, and Pliny preserves what one of them yielded. *One of these mines, which at the present day is still called Bæbelo, furnished Hannibal with three hundred pounds' weight of silver per day. The mountain is already excavated for a distance of fifteen hundred paces; and throughout the whole of this distance there are water-bearers standing night and day, baling out the water in turns, regulated by the light of torches, and so forming quite a river.* Strabo, quoting Polybius, indicates that the district around New Carthage was producing something on the order of thirty-five tonnes of silver a year when the Romans had taken it over. Pliny's sentence is the only place in this study where the human cost of an extractive operation is visible in a primary source, and it is visible in a subordinate clause: men standing in a tunnel a mile and a half into a mountain, working in shifts timed by torchlight, moving water so that other men could move silver. None of them was Carthaginian, and no Carthaginian ever had to look at them.

The subject and allied cities. Sicilian and Sardinian communities paid tribute; the Libyphoenician towns of Africa paid contributions and, by the third century, owed men to the metropolis by law; and the Phoenician cities of the coast paid in ships and contingents.

Now set the four side by side. Land tax on Libyans. Customs on foreign trade. Silver from Iberians. Tribute from subject cities. **Every stream ran from outside the citizen body.** In ordinary times a Carthaginian citizen paid no direct tax at all — and the one recorded moment when a direct levy on individuals looked likely was treated not as a burden to be shared but as a crisis to be averted.

That phrase of Livy's, *without any tax falling on individual citizens*, is the boundary of the settlement written in fiscal terms. It says who was inside more exactly than any of the political sources manage.

Did anything come back?

The framework asks whether extraction corresponds to a return, and the answer here has to be given separately for each population, because it varies from *very much* to *almost nothing*.

For the Carthaginian citizen the return was substantial and has already been measured: harbours and shipyards, a wall that held for six centuries, planned streets with water storage and drainage, a fleet that employed him, and a posting abroad that could make him rich. His taxes were nil and his dividend was real, which is the arrangement any citizen body would choose if it could.

For the old Phoenician towns the return was partial and genuine: naval protection, access to a trading system that reached Britain and West Africa, membership of a treaty network, and the retention of their own institutions.

For the Libyan cultivator, so far as the evidence reaches, there was almost nothing. Nothing was built inland for him that can be identified — no temple, no school, no road that was not a collection route. The irrigation works Agathocles' soldiers admired in 310 watered the estates of the leading Carthaginians, not the villages. What he did receive is real and should not be omitted for the sake of a cleaner argument: the plain was not raided while Carthage held it, and Numidian raiding was a serious and recurrent danger; there were markets, a currency, and agricultural technique that ran in both directions, since Mago's manual drew on African as well as Phoenician practice. But set a quarter of the harvest against that and the ledger does not balance, and the men who paid it knew the arithmetic better than anyone.

For the Iberian in the shaft at Baebelo there was nothing at all, and the sources do not pretend otherwise.

The private layer

Now the mechanism, which is the module's structural finding and which three hostile witnesses describe from three different angles across two and a half centuries.

Aristotle, around 340, identifies the input: the highest offices at Carthage are effectively bought, and *those who have been at the expense of purchasing their places will be in the habit of repaying themselves*. Polybius, in the second century, identifies the selection criterion that follows from it: the administrator who is honoured is the one who extracts most and treats the subjects hardest. Livy, describing 196, identifies the leakage at the other end: the revenues frittered away partly by careless management and partly by fraudulent appropriation by leading men and senior magistrates.

Put the three together and the shape is unmistakable. Carthaginian extraction ran a private layer inside the public one. The state assessed a quarter of the Libyan crop; the governor took what he could on top of that; and what reached the treasury was whatever survived both. This is not an accusation of unusual Punic venality — the same structure appears wherever offices are financed by their holders, and Rome would shortly demonstrate it on a far larger scale in the same provinces. It is a consequence of the transmission rule, and it follows from it as a matter of arithmetic.

The consequence worth naming is what it does over time. **An extraction system whose collectors finance themselves is not merely leaky; it is self-intensifying.** The rate at the bottom is not set by the state's requirement. It is set by the state's requirement *plus* the collector's, and the collector's is set by what he paid for the office, which is set in turn by what the office is known to yield. Each generation of purchasers bids against the last generation's take. That is a ratchet, and it has no natural stopping point short of the level at which the subject population can no longer pay — because nothing in the mechanism can register that level until it is reached.

There is direct evidence that it was reached. The proximate grievance of 241 was Hanno's wartime doubling of the tribute, and when the mutineers sent word to the African settlements, seventy thousand men came over with provisions and money. That is what the ceiling looks like from below.

Where it went

The outputs are easier to see than the inputs, because most of them were built.

The fleet and its ship-sheds; the walls; the artificial harbours; the annual payroll of a professional army recruited from four countries, which was the single largest running cost and the one that could not be deferred; the tithe to Melqart at Tyre; and the

temples, of which the sacrificial tariff shows a portion returning to the priesthoods as fees.

And, from 241, the indemnities. This is worth stating as a structural fact rather than a misfortune. After the First Punic War Carthage owed Rome three thousand two hundred talents, and twelve hundred more when Rome seized Sardinia during the mercenary crisis. After the Second it owed ten thousand over fifty years. For the last century of its existence, therefore, a growing share of Carthaginian extraction was being taken from Libyans and Iberians and forwarded to Rome — the order functioning, in its final phase, as a collection agency on behalf of the power that had defeated it. The last instalment was paid in 152. Carthage was destroyed in 146. What that sequence means belongs to Module 10, but it should be noticed here, because it is the extraction record that supplies it.

What happened to the man who counted

Return now to 196, because the aftermath of Hannibal's audit is the most informative single episode in the extraction record and it demonstrates something the ledgers cannot.

Livy is precise about who was damaged and how they took it. *Those who had for years been battening on their pilferings from the national treasury were as furious as if it was the seizure of their personal property and not the forcible recovery of what they had stolen that was contemplated.* The order these men belonged to was the tribunal created four centuries earlier to audit generals — the body Justin says was established because a family of commanders had grown dangerous to the liberty of the state. By 196 it had become the thing it was built to prevent. Livy describes it without qualification: *The order of judges exercised supreme power in Carthage at that time, owing mainly to the fact that they held office for life. The property, reputation and life of everyone were in their power.* Hannibal, having exposed the skim, also carried a law making them annually elected with a bar on consecutive terms — an attack on the men and on the mechanism at once.

Their answer was to write to Rome. They reported that Hannibal was corresponding with Antiochus and plotting a new war; Scipio Africanus argued for a long time against acting on it, on the grounds that it was beneath Rome to take up the quarrels of Carthaginian politics; his opponents prevailed, and a Roman delegation was sent. Hannibal understood what it meant, showed himself in the forum during the day to allay suspicion, and rode out that night to a coastal stronghold between Acylla and Thapsus where a ship was waiting. He never saw Africa again.

Read that from the position of the men who did it, because the framework insists on it and because the usual reading — that they were traitors — explains nothing. Not one of them thought he was selling his country. Each was defending a position he had bought, expected to recoup, and intended to pass to a son, against a man who had just declared that the recoupment was theft and made the declaration stick in a public assembly. Run the framework's default question on any one of them and it returns the same answer: if the audit stands, he is worse off, permanently, and so is his family. The coalition that formed against Hannibal formed because every member of it had the same interest, and it did not need to be organised.

And note what instrument they reached for. They had no domestic means of removing him — he had the assembly behind him precisely because he had spared the citizens a tax. So they used the foreign power that had defeated them five years earlier, and it worked within months.

Reading extraction against the framework

Three findings.

Extraction sorted by caste, with the ruling population exempt in principle, and the exemption stated aloud. The framework predicts that extraction in an order of this kind will be sorted by caste rather than by capacity to pay. Carthage supplies the sharpest version available: not merely a lighter rate for citizens but no direct tax at all in normal times, with the possibility of one treated as a crisis, and with the whole of the revenue drawn from four streams every one of which originated outside the citizen body. The diagnostic worth carrying is this: **the moment to look for is the proposal of a direct levy on the ruling population, because the reaction to that proposal locates the settlement's real boundary more precisely than any constitutional document.** In 196 the reaction told us exactly where the line was, and told us in Livy's own words.

The purchased-office ratchet. Where the entrance to the governing class is bought and the purchase is recouped from a province, the effective extraction rate at the bottom is not set by the state's need but by an auction among the collectors, and it rises with each generation because each bidder prices the office by what the last holder took out of it. There is no feedback in the mechanism that can detect the subject's ceiling before it is hit. Aristotle names the input, Polybius names the selection pressure, Livy names the leakage, and 241 shows where it ends. This is the counterpart to the finding of Module 2 — that the openness of the oligarchy at its entrance was paid for at its periphery — and it supplies the machinery by which the payment kept getting larger.

And the audit is the tell. The most instructive fact in the whole extraction record is what happened when one man measured it. The measuring itself met no resistance; nobody disputed the numbers. What met resistance, instantly and effectively, was the consequence — and the resistance came not from the state, which had just elected him, but from the coordinating class, which removed him inside a year by inviting a foreign power to do it. **When an order's extraction has been captured by its own coordinating class, the reformer is expelled by the class rather than by the state, and the class will use an external power against him if it has one available.** Extraction reform threatens more positions simultaneously than any other kind, which is why it is the kind that most reliably ends the reformer. Carthage demonstrates it at the maximum available scale: the man removed was the most famous commander in the Mediterranean, fresh from seventeen years in the field, with the assembly behind him — and it took the men whose skim he had exposed less than a year to make him a fugitive.

A note on sources. The exact quotations are public-domain primary material. Livy on the condition of the Carthaginian revenues in 196, on Hannibal's audit and his statement to the assembly that the state could meet Rome's demands without any tax falling on individual citizens, on the fury of those who had been living off their pilferings, and on the order of judges holding office for life with the property, reputation and life of everyone in their power, is quoted from the Rev. Canon Roberts translation of *Ab Urbe Condita* 33.46–47. Livy wrote roughly two centuries after the events, drew here on sources hostile to the Carthaginian oligarchy and sympathetic to Hannibal, and his account of the flight to Cercina and Tyre carries novelistic detail that should not be pressed. Pliny on the Baebelo mine — the three hundred pounds of silver a day, the fifteen hundred paces of tunnel, and the water-bearers baling in turns by torchlight — is quoted from the Bostock and Riley translation of *Natural History* 33.31 (33.96–97); Pliny wrote in the first century AD about a mine then still working under Roman management, and the figure is his. The clause of the 509 treaty requiring sales in Libya and Sardinia to be concluded before a herald or town-clerk is quoted from Evelyn Shuckburgh's translation of Polybius 3.22. Aristotle on the purchase of offices and the habit of repaying oneself is quoted from Benjamin Jowett's translation of *Politics* 2.11. Polybius on the wartime exaction of half the crop, the doubling of the towns' tribute, and the Carthaginian preference for the harshest governors is from *Histories* 1.72 and is reported and paraphrased rather than quoted, the wording available to me being secondary; the reconstructed peacetime rate of about a quarter is a modern scholarly inference and is given as such. Strabo's report, quoting Polybius, of the silver output of the Carthago Nova district is at *Geography* 3.2.10 and is

paraphrased from the modern discussions, which put the figure at roughly thirty-five tonnes a year under Roman working; that is a Roman-period figure and is not evidence for Carthaginian output. The indemnity figures — three thousand two hundred talents after 241, twelve hundred more at the seizure of Sardinia, ten thousand over fifty years after 201, the final instalment paid in 152 — follow Polybius and the standard modern accounts. Aristotle's knowledge of Carthaginian treaties with the Etruscans regulating imports is reported at second hand through the ancient tradition and is noted as such. The characterisation of Carthaginian customs as substantial rests on the inference from Hannibal's reform rather than on any direct figure, and no Carthaginian fiscal document survives; the state's archive was destroyed in 146.

THEY KEPT THE VOYAGE HIDDEN

Module 7 · information and suppression — an order with no distant public to deceive, which classified its sailing directions instead, crucified its own commanders, let them speak from the cross, and was destroyed at last by a sentence with one word missing

Strabo, describing the tin islands off the north-west coast of Iberia, records a piece of Carthaginian conduct that has no parallel in this collection.

Now in former times it was the Phoenicians alone who carried on this commerce (that is, from Gades), for they kept the voyage hidden from every one else. And when once the Romans were closely following a certain ship-captain in order that they too might learn the markets in question, out of jealousy the ship-captain purposely drove his ship out of its course into shoal water; and after he had lured the followers into the same ruin, he himself escaped by a piece of wreckage and received from the State the value of the cargo he had lost.

Read the last clause slowly, because it is the one that matters. A merchant captain, shadowed by a Roman vessel, ran his own ship aground to destroy the pursuer, and swam away from the wreck; and the state paid him for the cargo. That is not a man's private zeal. It is a policy with a budget line — a standing indemnity for the destruction of one's own property in defence of a sailing direction. Somebody in Carthage had decided in advance what a route was worth, and the answer was: more than a ship.

And then Strabo, in the same paragraph, sets the alternative beside it. *Still, by trying many times, the Romans learned all about the voyage. After Publius Crassus crossed over to these people and saw that the metals were being dug from only a slight depth, and that the men there were peaceable, he forthwith laid abundant information before all who wished to traffic over this sea, albeit a wider sea than that which separates Britain from the continent.*

Two doctrines of information, in one passage, from a writer with no interest in contrasting them. Carthage treats knowledge as a monopoly asset, defended to destruction and indemnified from the treasury. Rome treats it as something to be published to whoever will use it. The whole of this module is contained in that difference, and so is a good deal of the difference between the two states.

Where is the seam?

The framework's expectation for an order of this kind is specific and it fails here in an instructive way.

In the colonial studies of this collection the information problem is always the same shape. There is a metropolitan public that funds the enterprise and believes in it, there is a colony where things are done that the public would not fund if it saw them, and the order's central and unending task is to keep the two ends of the seam from meeting. Distance does most of the work; censorship, controlled despatches and managed visits do the rest. What is hidden from the metropole is precisely what the conquered live.

Carthage had no metropole. Tyre could not call it to account and by the fifth century was itself a Persian dependency. There was no home electorate elsewhere, no parliament to mislead, no press, no distant taxpayer whose conscience had to be managed. The men who governed Africa were the men who lived in Carthage, and the men who lived in Carthage were the beneficiaries. The Libyan cultivator handing over a quarter of his crop was not a secret being kept from anybody — every Carthaginian knew, and the whole political class had been designed around the fact.

So the concealment budget did not disappear. It relocated. **The seam at Carthage ran horizontally, between the order and its commercial rivals, rather than vertically between the apex and the ruled.** What was classified was not what was being done in Africa but where the tin came from and how you got there. That inversion is the module's first finding, and it carries a diagnostic with it: **ask what an order pays to conceal, and from whom, because the answer identifies which audience actually constrains it.** For Carthage the answer was other states — and that is a second confirmation, from a different direction, of the finding of Module 3. Nobody classifies what no one with power will act on.

What was actually secret

Three categories, and all three were defended by instruments rather than by exhortation.

Routes and markets. The Atlantic trade was the crown asset and it was held closed for centuries. Hanno's voyage down the African coast and Himilco's northward are known to us in Greek versions, and Hanno's is said to have been recorded on a tablet set up in a temple at Carthage — which is a nicely exact picture of the arrangement, the record displayed inside the city's own sanctuary and denied to everyone outside it. Strabo's shipmaster is the enforcement mechanism at the individual level. The result

was that the Greeks argued for centuries about whether the tin islands existed and where.

Zones. The treaties with Rome converted the secret into a frontier. The first, of 509, opens by shutting the sea: *The Romans and their allies not to sail with long ships beyond the Fair Promontory unless forced by storm or by enemies*. The second, of 348, extends the exclusion and makes its purpose plain: *The Romans shall not maraud or trade or found a city on the farther side of Fair Promontory, Mastia, and Tarseum.* Polybius, reading these clauses two centuries later, drew the obvious inference — the phrasing shows that the Carthaginians regarded Libya and Sardinia as their own. It is also, and more precisely, an information regime. You cannot chart a coast you may not sail past, and a treaty that keeps rival hulls out of a sea keeps rival knowledge out of it too. The same instrument that protected the trade protected the map.

The dockyards. Appian describes the naval harbour and the arrangement is unmistakable in intent: the shipyards for two hundred and twenty vessels around an inner island, the admiral's house on the island raised high enough that he could watch the open sea while nobody approaching from the sea could see in, and the whole complex enclosed by a double wall so that not even merchants entering the commercial basin could see the dockyards. That is a classification system built in stone. What Carthage had, how many hulls, in what state of readiness — this was the one military fact worth hiding from a rival, and the city hid it architecturally.

The channel that faced inward

Now the internal side, which is where the order's real anxieties show.

Carthage ran covert reporting and the record preserves one operation in detail. Alarmed at Alexander's progress and fearing that Africa might be next, the Carthaginians sent a man named Hamilcar Rhodanus to find out his intentions. He presented himself at the Macedonian court as an exile seeking refuge and offering to serve in a campaign against his own city, got access through Parmenio, and, having learned what he was sent to learn, *sent a full account of them to his countrymen, inscribed on wooden tablets, with blank wax spread over the writing*. This is a state running an agent under a cover story and reporting in concealed script. And the sequel belongs to the module just as much: *The Carthaginians, however, when he returned home after the death of Alexander, put him to death, not only ungratefully but cruelly, on pretence that he had offered to sell their city to the king.* The cover story was used as the charge.

Above that sat the tribunal. The Hundred and Four had been created, four centuries earlier, to audit generals on their return; by 196 Livy could describe it

without qualification as an apparatus of surveillance over the entire governing class — *The property, reputation and life of everyone were in their power. Whoever offended one of the order had an enemy in every member, and when the judges were hostile there was always a prosecutor to be found amongst them.* A body in which any offence made a hundred and four enemies and produced a prosecutor on demand is an information system as much as a court: it guarantees that everything a magnate does is watched by men with a standing incentive to report it.

And the record preserves one moment where that system produced something genuinely strange. Around 314 the senate voted on a treason charge against the *rab* Hamilcar, who was then in command in Sicily; and because he had an army, they took their votes secretly, sealed the several opinions in an urn unread, and left them there until another commander should return from the island. He died before the seal was broken. Justin's comment is that a man unjustly condemned unheard was released from punishment by the kindness of fate. What it shows structurally is an order that could reach a verdict and then physically suspend its own knowledge of the verdict, in a jar, because the accused had troops.

What could be said aloud

Set against all that, however, is a body of evidence pointing hard the other way, and the module fails if it suppresses it.

Aristotle, comparing constitutions, notes that when the Carthaginian suffetes and elders disagreed, the matter went to the assembly, and that there *whatever they bring before the people is not only heard but also determined by them, and any one who likes may oppose it; now this is not permitted in Sparta and Crete*. Whatever the practice amounted to, the *right to oppose in public* is recorded by a hostile Greek observer as a distinguishing feature of the Carthaginian system, and he contrasts it favourably with two states routinely admired for their discipline.

And the most vivid single illustration is a scene of execution. Bomilcar, having attempted a coup during the Agathocles crisis, was crucified in the middle of the forum — deliberately, Justin says, in the place that had been the scene of his honours. From the cross he then denounced the state at length: *from his cross, as if he had been on a judgment-seat, he inveighed against the injustice of the Carthaginians*, listing by name the men the city had killed on false charges of aspiring to sovereignty, banished innocent, or secretly condemned — and, Justin adds, he uttered all this with a loud voice before a numerous assembly of the people, and then died.

That is not a regime that controls what its citizens hear. A state nailing a man to a cross in its central square and letting him deliver a catalogue of its judicial murders to a

crowd is a state whose information problem lies somewhere else entirely. Which is the point: **Carthaginian suppression faced upward, at rivals for position, and outward, at rival states. It did not face downward.** There was no need. The population was inside the settlement, held by a full benefit column and a robe cut for its own use, and there was nothing it had to be prevented from knowing.

The paragraph that took the city

And then, at the end, the seam was run against Carthage — by an opponent who understood it perfectly.

In 149 the Carthaginians, facing a Roman declaration of war, sent envoys offering unconditional surrender. Diodorus records the answer and the sentence carrying it is the most important in this module:

The senate, accepting their surrender, made answer that inasmuch as the Carthaginians were well advised, the senate granted them their laws, territory, sanctuaries, tombs, freedom, and property (the city of Carthage, however, was nowhere mentioned, their intention to destroy it being suppressed): these mercies the Carthaginians were to obtain provided they gave three hundred hostages, senators' sons, and obeyed the orders of the consuls.

Six things granted; one thing not mentioned. Every word of the grant was true, and the omission was the whole content of the policy. The Carthaginians, Diodorus continues, thought they were quit of the war, and sent the hostages with great lamentation. Then the consuls demanded the arms: *the Romans received from them two hundred thousand weapons of all sorts and two thousand catapults*. Only then came the last demand — that the population abandon the site and rebuild ten miles inland, away from the sea.

That is a sequence built entirely out of managed information, executed in three stages, each concession purchased with a picture of the future that Rome knew to be false. And the party deceived was not an illiterate subject peasantry. It was the entire governing class of a sovereign state with six centuries of commercial and diplomatic experience, a professional archive, and a tradition of espionage sophisticated enough to run an agent inside Alexander's court.

Set that beside the shipmaster in the shoals and the contrast becomes the module's sharpest finding. **Carthage lost its final war to an information operation before it lost a battle.** The order that would wreck its own hull to protect a sailing direction, and reimburse the captain for doing it, handed over three hundred of its sons, two hundred thousand weapons and two thousand catapults on the strength of a

document with one word missing. It had a highly developed doctrine for protecting what it knew, and no doctrine at all for testing what it was told.

The disposal of the record

There is a last layer, and it governs every sentence of this study.

Carthage was a literate civilisation that produced books. Mago's twenty-eight volumes on husbandry; Hanno's periplus; Himilco's northern voyage; annals of some kind, since Greek writers report Carthaginian records; and whatever else six centuries accumulate. Sallust, writing in the first century, says he worked from Punic books belonging to King Hiempsal.

In 146 the Roman Senate disposed of the libraries by giving them to the Numidian kings, and kept one work, which it had translated into Latin at public expense: the manual on how to run an estate. Everything else disappeared. The Punic original of Mago is lost, and so is the Latin translation; he survives in fragments quoted by Roman agronomists.

The consequence is that this collection has reconstructed Carthage almost entirely from the testimony of the two peoples who fought and destroyed it. Every module here has leaned on Polybius, Diodorus, Livy, Justin, Appian and Aristotle — hostile, external, and in several cases writing centuries after the fact. The one Carthaginian voice that speaks continuously is the votive formula on the tophet stelae, which says the same twelve words twenty thousand times.

That is not an accident of survival. It is the last operation in the sequence, and it should be named as such: **the final act of a conquest is the disposal of the loser's records, and what the conqueror chooses to keep tells you what he wanted.** Rome wanted the agronomy. It did not want the history, and it did not want anybody else to have it either — the libraries went to a client dynasty rather than to Rome's own shelves. The information asymmetry that matters most in this study is therefore not one Carthage ran. It is the one that was run on Carthage after it was dead, and it is still running.

Reading information against the framework

Three findings.

The seam can run horizontally rather than vertically, and the concealment budget relocates rather than disappearing. The colonial pattern in this collection — hide from the metropolitan public what the conquered live — presupposes a funding population at a distance whose belief is required. Carthage had none, and the

prediction fails cleanly. But the order still spent heavily on secrecy: on route denial, on exclusion zones written into treaties, on architecture that blinded its own harbour, and on a standing indemnity for masters who destroyed their cargoes. The refinement to carry is the diagnostic: **an order's classification list identifies the audience that actually constrains it.** Carthage classified sailing directions and hull counts, and did not classify the rate of the Libyan assessment. Read backwards, that tells you which of the two the apex expected somebody to act on.

Suppression aimed upward at the coordinating class, with an open forum below it, is a coherent configuration and should be recorded as one. The same order that ran a tribunal in which any offence created a hundred and four prosecutors, that sealed a treason verdict in a jar because the defendant had an army, and that crucified commanders for losing battles, also let any citizen oppose a motion in the assembly and let a crucified conspirator recite its judicial murders to a crowd in the forum. This is not a contradiction. It is what an information regime looks like when the only serious threat to the settlement comes from inside the governing class and the population below is a shareholder rather than a subject. **Where the base is inside the settlement, the surveillance points at peers.**

And a doctrine of commercial secrecy is not a doctrine of strategic scepticism; it may be the reverse. This is the finding with the longest reach. Carthage had six centuries of institutional practice in *keeping* information — controlling routes, running agents, concealing hulls, punishing leakers — and, so far as the record shows, no comparable practice in *auditing* information arriving from outside. In 149 it accepted, in sequence, a grant that omitted the one thing that mattered, and gave up its children, its weapons and its artillery before the omission was explained to it. An order that invests in protecting its own knowledge builds institutions to detect *outflow*, and outflow-detection tells you nothing about whether the thing coming in is true. The seam that finally mattered was not the one Carthage was managing. It was the one being managed on Carthage, in a Roman senate house, by men who had noticed that a document can be entirely honest and still be a weapon.

A note on sources. The exact quotations are public-domain primary material. Strabo on the Phoenician concealment of the Cassiterides voyage, the shipmaster who ran aground and was indemnified by the state, and Publius Crassus's subsequent publication of the route, is quoted from the 1923 Loeb translation of *Geography* 3.5.11 as reproduced at LacusCurtius, where the text is in the public domain; Strabo wrote in the Augustan period about a practice he places in an earlier era, and the story is a single late report. The clauses of the Roman treaties of 509 and 348 are quoted from W. R. Paton's and Evelyn Shuckburgh's translations of Polybius 3.22 and 3.24; Polybius says

he read the texts himself on bronze at Rome, which is the best provenance any document in this study has. Aristotle on the assembly's power to determine matters and on any citizen's right to oppose is quoted from Benjamin Jowett's translation of *Politics* 2.11. Justin is quoted from the 1886 English edition of the *Epitome*: the mission of Hamilcar Rhodanus, his report inscribed on wooden tablets under blank wax, and his execution on his return (21.6); and Bomilcar's denunciation of Carthaginian injustice from the cross in the forum (22.7). The sealed and unread verdict on the *rab* Hamilcar around 314 is at Justin 22.3 and is reported here rather than quoted. All of these rest on Justin alone, epitomising a lost history centuries after the events, and the rhetorical set-pieces in particular should not be pressed. Livy on the powers of the order of judges is quoted from the Rev. Canon Roberts translation of 33.46. Diodorus on the Roman senate's answer to the Carthaginian surrender in 149 — the six things granted, the city nowhere mentioned, the intention to destroy it suppressed — and on the two hundred thousand weapons and two thousand catapults surrendered, is quoted from the Loeb translation of Book 32 as reproduced at LacusCurtius. Appian's description of the naval harbour, its shipyards, the admiral's raised house and the double wall screening the dockyards from merchants is reported from the White translation and is a single late source drawing on a lost portion of Polybius; his figures are given as his. The traditions concerning Hanno's and Himilco's voyages, the tablet set up in a Carthaginian temple, the fate of the Carthaginian libraries in 146, the Senate's commission to translate Mago, and Sallust's use of Punic books belonging to King Hiempsal follow the standard accounts and are paraphrased. One further datum was deliberately omitted: there is a tradition, reported at Justin 20.5 in connection with the treason of Suniatus, that Carthage forbade its citizens by public law to learn Greek letters. It would have served this module well, but I was unable to verify the wording of the passage against a text reproducing it, and by the discipline of this series a line that cannot be confirmed is dropped rather than reconstructed. It is recorded here as a claim to be checked, not used.

SOME DESERT THEIR POSTS, OTHERS ATTEMPT TO BECOME TYRANTS

Module 8 · elite coordination and the default — an arrangement that held every man in the governing class for four centuries except the one who held the army, and what he did about it

A durable order is not held together by anybody's loyalty. It is held together because the men who could break it are each, individually, better off with it standing — so that in defending his own position each of them defends the whole, without meaning to, without coordinating, and frequently while hating the others who are doing the same thing. That is the default: an arrangement in which the sum of ordinary self-interest is the arrangement's own defence. Some orders achieve it well and some badly, and where an order fractures, the fracture is almost always at a node where somebody with standing and means has stopped being better off.

Carthage achieved it about as well as any state in the ancient world, and the raw record is more impressive than any ancient judgement about it. From the middle of the sixth century to 146 — four hundred years — the city was never overthrown from within, never subjected to a lasting tyranny, never had a civil war that changed who owned what, and was never taken by an enemy. Aristotle, writing in the 340s, ranked its constitution with those of Sparta and Crete as one of the three best in the known world, and held that *the Carthaginians have never had any rebellion worth speaking of, and have never been under the rule of a tyrant*. Polybius, two centuries later and with no love for the place, thought its constitution had been excellent in its prime.

And yet within those four centuries the record shows an attempted coup or a judicial killing at the top roughly once a generation, and it shows them clustered with unmistakable precision at a single office. This module is about why the default held everywhere it held, and about the one position where it did not — because Carthage lets us watch a mispriced node with a clarity almost nothing else in the corpus provides, and because a Greek historian named the mechanism in the fourth century BC in terms this collection would not improve on.

Where it held

Take the coordinating class node by node and ask the diagnostic question: if the whole arrangement collapsed tomorrow, is this man better or worse off?

The magnates of the council. Aristotle's description of the machinery reads like a design brief for making membership valuable and entry difficult. Magistrates are chosen with an eye to wealth as well as merit; one man commonly holds several offices at once; and the important continuing business is handled by boards of five, of which he notes that they *have under them many important matters*, that they fill vacancies in their own number, and that they *hold office longer than any other magistrates, for they are appointed before they enter office and continue after they go out*. A body that co-opts its own successors, holds the substantive files, and is in post before and after its formal term is a body whose members' positions are entirely the creation of the arrangement. Collapse it and they are rich men with no standing. Worse off. Defends.

The Hundred and Four. The most perfectly positioned institution in this study. It held office for life; it audited returning commanders; and by Livy's account it had become an apparatus before which *the property, reputation and life of everyone were in their power*. Its members owned nothing except the right to hold everybody else to account — which means that any weakening of the arrangement is a total loss, not a partial one. Catastrophically worse off. Defends hardest of all, and Module 6 has already shown how hard: when Hannibal audited the revenues in 196 and threatened the private layer, the order removed him inside a year by inviting Rome to do it. That is a node defending its position at the cost of the state, and doing so precisely because the position was all it had.

The priesthoods. Not a separate estate. The same families supplied the *rab*, the suffete and the priest, and a man might be more than one of these things; the tophet stele of Hanno son of Gerashtart records his father's high magistracy and his grandfather's suffeteship in the same breath as his vow. Where the interpreter class is the governing class, it generates no independent claimant. Defends.

The old Phoenician cities. Utica named as a contracting party to Carthage's own treaty with Rome; institutions retained; access to the trading system. Better off inside. Defends — for four centuries, including in 241 when the rest of Africa rose and Utica stood siege rather than join it.

The Libyphoenician towns. Bound by an obligation to supply men that the citizens of Carthage did not carry — which is simultaneously a mark of subordination and a mark of inclusion. Better off than the Libyans, and behaved accordingly.

And underneath all of it, the ordinary citizen, priced in Module 5 and not this module's subject, but structurally relevant for one reason: Aristotle's panacea meant

that a poor Carthaginian's route to property ran through the same empire the magnates ran. So the base was inside the default too. That is why there was no garrison in Carthage and no political police: the apex did not have to hold the city down, because everybody in it was a shareholder.

Note what this does *not* require. None of these men had to like one another. Hanno the Great's faction and the Barcid house spent forty years in open political warfare, and at no point did either side consider breaking the arrangement, because the arrangement was what made the fight worth winning. That is the default working exactly as it should: mutual hatred, channelled entirely into competition for position *within* a structure that both sides need intact.

Where it broke

Now the exception. And the remarkable thing is that we do not have to infer it, because Diodorus states it as a general law, in structural terms, while explaining a specific coup.

In 310, with Agathocles in Africa, the council appointed two generals: *Hanno and Bormilcar, men who had an inherited feud. The councillors thought, indeed, that because of the private mistrust and enmity of the generals the safety of the city as a whole would be secured; but they completely missed the truth.* Bomilcar, who wanted the tyranny and had lacked an opportunity, had just been handed one.

Then Diodorus stops the narrative and explains why this kept happening:

The basic cause in this matter was the Carthaginians' severity in inflicting punishments. In their wars they advance their leading men to commands, taking it for granted that these should be the first to brave the danger for the whole state; but when they gain peace, they plague these same men with suits, bring false charges against them through envy, and load them down with penalties. Therefore some of those who are placed in positions of command, fearing the trials in the courts, desert their posts, but others attempt to become tyrants.

That is a default failure diagnosed in the fourth century BC, and it is worth setting out formally because the ancient statement is more precise than most modern ones.

Run the diagnostic on the Carthaginian general. In war he is required to be first into danger for a state that will not thank him. In peace he faces a tribunal of life-tenured colleagues before which, as Livy puts it, whoever offended one had an enemy in every member and a prosecutor was always available. Defeat means a cross — Hanno at Messana in 264 for withdrawing a garrison, Hannibal after Sardinia, Bomilcar in the forum. And success is no safer, because a victorious commander with an army is the precise thing the tribunal exists to prevent. He has no private base of his own: no

retinue, no lands held by military tenure, no clientage, nothing that survives the loss of the command. His army is hired or conscripted and belongs to the state.

So the answer to the diagnostic question comes back inverted. For every other man in the Carthaginian hierarchy, the arrangement standing is what protects him. For the man holding the army, **the arrangement standing is what threatens him** — and the better he does his job, the more it threatens him.

The record is then a catalogue of Diodorus' two predicted behaviours, and of nothing else.

Deserting the post. Himilco returning from a plague-destroyed campaign, walking through the city in the mean dress of a slave, going into his house and starving himself before anyone could try him. Hamilcar Rhodanus, who went into Alexander's court under cover, reported home in concealed script, and was executed on his return on the strength of the cover story. Commanders who declined to press an advantage because a battle risked is a cross risked. The Cambridge scholarship notes the shape of it precisely: the Carthaginians almost never punished a general for lack of aggression — they punished him for fighting and losing, which is exactly the incentive that produces cautious generalship and men who prefer to keep an army intact rather than spend it.

Attempting tyranny. Malchus in the sixth century, besieging his own city with his own army and declaring he had come not to overthrow but to recover it — and executed within the year on a charge of aspiring to be king. Hanno the *princeps* in the fourth, planning to poison the entire senate at his daughter's wedding, and, when that failed, raising twenty thousand armed slaves. Bomilcar in 308, moving with five hundred citizens and a thousand mercenaries, abandoned when his followers were promised pardon, and crucified in the middle of the forum. Hasdrubal the Fair, on Fabius Pictor's hostile report, planning to establish himself as king in Africa before accepting the Spanish command instead. And at the very end, in 147, Hasdrubal the Boetharch, of whom the Suda preserves this: the council cried out against him, so *he killed some of the councillors and, in respect of everything which already made him fearful, came to behave more like a tyrant than a general — seeing his sole security as lying in being frightening to them and thus hard to attack*. That is Diodorus' law running one hundred and sixty years after he stated it, in the last months of the city's life.

Now name the mechanism, because it is the module's central contribution. **A default fails at whichever node the arrangement prices below its outside option, and the failure is a property of the position rather than of the men in it.** Carthage is an unusually clean demonstration because everything else is held constant: the same class, the same families, the same city, the same religion, the same interests — and the

one man among them who held organised force was the one man the arrangement made worse off.

And there is a second half to the finding, which the council's own conduct supplies. Look at what the apex did about the problem. It appointed feuding pairs so that generals would watch each other. It audited every return. It crucified failures. Each of those measures is entirely rational from a council chair — and each of them *lowered* the value of holding command honestly and therefore *raised* the relative value of seizing the state. The remedy was made of the same material as the disease. State it as a trap worth watching for in every case: **the instruments an apex uses to police a mispriced position are themselves part of what makes it mispriced, so that increasing the penalty accelerates the failure it was meant to prevent.**

The third answer

Diodorus names two responses. Carthage produced a third, and it is the most consequential thing in its political history.

After the Mercenary War, Hamilcar Barca went to Spain — and over the next twenty years he and his successors built something no Carthaginian commander had ever had. A revenue base of their own, in the silver of the south, which Pliny says yielded three hundred pounds a day from one mine alone. An army recruited and paid locally, which swore to the commander. A capital, Qart-hadasht again, New Carthage, founded on the Iberian coast rather than in Africa. A command passing within the family by blood and marriage — Hamilcar to his son-in-law Hasdrubal the Fair, and then to his son Hannibal — with Hasdrubal marrying an Iberian princess and conducting his own diplomacy, so that Rome treated the Ebro agreement as made with the man rather than with the state.

Read that structurally rather than biographically and it is not a rebellion and not loyalty. It is a *relocation*. **The Barcids solved the general's problem by moving his position beyond the reach of the mechanism that priced it.** They never repudiated Carthage, never marched on it, never declared independence; they simply built, at a distance of a thousand miles, a position whose value no longer depended on the goodwill of the Hundred and Four. And for the first time in four hundred years the most dangerous men in the Carthaginian system had a way to be safe and formally loyal at the same time.

The discipline here has to be stated. How independent Barcid Spain actually was is genuinely disputed, the scholarship divides, and every surviving source is Roman and has an interest in a rogue dynasty. What is not in dispute is the structure: a family

holding a distant province with its own silver, its own troops and its own treaties, passing the command among themselves for twenty years.

Which is also exactly why Hanno the Great's faction fought them so relentlessly from inside the council. From that chair, a Barcid house with a province, an army and a treasury of its own was precisely the thing the tribunal had been invented in the fifth century to prevent — arriving by a route the constitution had no instrument to reach. The bitterest faction fight in Carthaginian history was not, at bottom, about war with Rome. It was about whether the general's node could be allowed to escape.

The node the apex could not price

And now the fracture that actually ended the order, which is at a node outside the walls.

The Numidian princes were attached to the arrangement as clients rather than as members: bound by subsidy, by cavalry contracts, and by marriage. The mechanism worked and we can watch it work. In 239, in the middle of the Mercenary War, the Numidian prince Naravas came over to Hamilcar with two thousand cavalry and was given Hamilcar's daughter in marriage. That is the client system operating exactly as designed — standing and means, purchased with money and a bride, at a moment when the purchase decided a campaign.

But apply the diagnostic to a client and the answer differs from every other node in a specific and dangerous way. The magnate, the judge, the priest, the Utican, the Libyphoenician — each of them holds a position whose value is created by the arrangement itself and cannot be replicated outside it. The client holds a position that exists independently and is merely *rented* each year. He is not better off because the arrangement exists; he is better off because this year's payment arrived. **A client is the one node in a hierarchy whose price is set in a market the apex does not control**, which means his default answer can be changed by a third party without the apex doing anything wrong.

Rome changed it. Masinissa — the Massylian prince raised in and around Carthage, who had campaigned in Carthaginian armies in Spain and been betrothed to a Carthaginian wife — went over in 206, took Syphax's kingdom with Roman help, rode with the legions at Zama, and then spent fifty years doing to Carthage precisely what Carthage had done to the Libyans: taking a district at a time, knowing that the peace terms of 201 forbade Carthage to make war without Roman permission. In 150 the Carthaginians finally fought him at Oroscopa, and lost, and the fighting itself was the treaty breach Rome had been waiting for. The war that destroyed the city was formally a war about a client.

Module 4 established that Carthage had manufactured that neighbour by refusing to admit him while saturating him with its own institutions. Module 8 completes the account: having manufactured him, it could only ever rent him, and somebody outbid.

What did not happen

One negative finding belongs here, because it is the strongest evidence that the core default held to the end.

In 149, when Rome demanded the hostages, then the weapons, then the abandonment of the site, and the city resolved to fight, there was no Carthaginian coup. No faction opened the gates. No popular rising demanded terms. Utica had already gone over and the Numidians were on the other side, but inside the walls the arrangement held — and the city that had been unable to trust a general for four centuries stood a three-year siege under one, who murdered councillors to make himself safe while conducting the defence, and whom nobody removed.

That is what a well-built default looks like at the moment of destruction. It did not dissolve. It was dismantled from the outside inward: allies first, then clients, then the coordinating class turning on itself only when the outcome was already certain.

Reading the default against the framework

Four findings, and the second and fourth are the ones to carry.

A default fails at whichever node the arrangement prices below its outside option, and the failure is structural rather than moral. Carthage supplies the cleanest available demonstration because every other variable is held constant. The men who attempted tyranny were of the same families, the same religion and the same class as the men who crucified them; what distinguished them was that they had held the army, and that holding the army was the one position in the system that the system punished. Diodorus saw this in the fourth century BC and put it in one sentence: some, fearing the courts, desert their posts, and others attempt to become tyrants. A study that reads those men as ambitious or those judges as paranoid has missed the whole of it. Both groups were doing the sensible thing from where they stood.

An apex that responds to a mispriced node by raising the penalty accelerates the failure, because the penalty is what made the outside option attractive. The feuding pairs, the standing audit, the life tenure of the judges and the crosses in the forum were all rational instruments from the council's position, and every one of them increased the general's incentive to move against the state. Carthage spent four centuries tightening a mechanism that was itself the cause of what it was tightened

against. This is worth carrying as a general trap: **when a node keeps failing, check whether the instruments of correction are part of the pricing**, because if they are, every increase in severity buys a short-term deterrent at the cost of a larger long-term incentive.

Relocation is the third response, alongside desertion and coup, and it produces the largest historical consequences. Hamilcar Barca neither deserted nor rebelled. He moved his position to a frontier where the pricing mechanism could not reach it, kept the formal relationship intact, and financed himself. This option exists only where the order has a frontier province with independent revenue, and where it exists, it is by far the most attractive of the three to a competent man — which means that **an order with a mispriced coordinating node and an available frontier should expect its most capable commanders to migrate there, and should expect its greatest external adventures to originate at the periphery rather than at the centre.** Carthage's supreme military effort against Rome was launched from Spain by a family that had gone there because Africa was unsafe for generals. The framework should record this: the escape valve for an internal pricing failure can become the state's principal instrument of foreign policy, and nobody at the centre will have chosen it.

And clients are nodes the apex does not price. The default's arithmetic covers everyone whose position the arrangement creates. It does not cover a man whose position exists independently and is merely rented, because his answer to the diagnostic question is set by whoever is bidding this year. Carthage's internal default survived every test for four hundred years — coups, mutinies, invasions, defeats, and a rising of the whole countryside — and was finally broken at the one node it had built itself and could never own. It had made the Numidian kingship by refusing to admit the Numidians; it had held it for a century with subsidies, contracts and a daughter in marriage; and in 206 a larger power made a better offer, and the client took it, and forty-four years later he had provoked the war that ended the city. **Every client is a rented node, and a rented node is a standing option held by any rival rich enough to exercise it.**

A note on sources. The exact quotations are public-domain primary material. Diodorus Siculus on the appointment of Hanno and Bomilcar as feuding colleagues, on the councillors having completely missed the truth, and on the Carthaginians' severity in punishment producing generals who desert their posts or attempt tyranny, is quoted from the Loeb translation of 20.10.1–4 as reproduced at LacusCurtius, where the text is in the public domain. Diodorus wrote in the first century BC and here appears to be following Timaeus, a Sicilian Greek hostile to Carthage; the passage is nonetheless the most valuable structural observation about Carthaginian government

to survive from antiquity, and its analysis is independently corroborated by the pattern of recorded coups and executions. Aristotle on Carthage never having suffered serious rebellion or a tyrant, on the boards of five and their tenure, and on the qualification of magistrates by wealth as well as merit, is quoted from Benjamin Jowett's translation of *Politics* 2.11. Livy on the powers of the order of judges is quoted from the Rev. Canon Roberts translation of 33.46. The Suda's notice of Hasdrubal the Boetharch killing councillors and behaving more like a tyrant than a general is quoted from the Suda On Line translation. Justin supplies Malchus (18.7), Hanno the *princeps* and his poisoned wedding banquet and armed slaves (21.4), Hamilcar Rhodanus (21.6), Himilco's suicide (19.3), and Bomilcar's speech from the cross (22.7); all rest on Justin alone and are reported rather than quoted here except where previously quoted in this study. Bomilcar's attempted coup of 308 with five hundred citizens and a thousand mercenaries is at Diodorus 20.43–44 and is reported from the standard summaries. The crucifixion of Hanno at Messana is at Polybius 1.11.5 with Zonaras 8.9.4; that of Hannibal after Sardinia at Polybius 1.24. Fabius Pictor's report of Hasdrubal the Fair's kingly ambitions is preserved at Polybius 3.8.2–3 and is expressly flagged by Polybius himself as coming from a hostile tradition. Naravas's defection with two thousand cavalry and his marriage to Hamilcar's daughter is at Polybius 1.78 and is paraphrased. Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited: the recent study of Carthaginian generalship in *Libyan Studies* on the pattern of punishing defeat rather than passivity, and on the soldiers' role in selecting commanders; and the long-running scholarly dispute over the independence of Barcid Spain, which is reported as unresolved and is flagged in the body as resting entirely on Roman sources with an interest in a rogue dynasty. The dating of Masinissa's defection to 206, of Oroscopa to 150, and of the final siege to 149–146 follows the standard accounts.

ANY ONE WHO LIKES MAY OPPOSE IT

Module 9 · plurality or foreclosure — the protections that really existed at Carthage, the factional quarrels that deposited them, the man who won the last one and was driven out of the country within the year, and the four hundred years in which nobody outside was ever let in

Aristotle, comparing Carthage with the two Greek states most admired for good order, records something that would surprise most readers of the Roman tradition. When the Carthaginian suffetes and the council of elders were unanimous, he says, they might decide between them whether to put a matter to the people at all; but when they disagreed, it went down — and there *whatever they bring before the people is not only heard but also determined by them, and any one who likes may oppose it; now this is not permitted in Sparta and Crete*.

A right to oppose in public, recorded by a hostile Greek philosopher, and contrasted favourably with Sparta.

The question this module exists to answer is whether that was a liberty or a sentence. A protection written into a constitution is worth nothing until four things can be shown about it: who could actually use it, against whom, whether it ever bit, and — the one that matters most — where it came from. Because liberties are not granted from above out of principle and they are not seized from below by the ruled, who have no organised force with which to seize anything. They are deposited by quarrels *inside* the hierarchy: a faction with standing and means, bargaining from strength against another faction, neither of them wanting to break the arrangement they both live on, arriving at a concession that then hardens into an institution and outlives everybody who made it. Residue. A protection nobody fought for is usually a protection nobody has, and the way to find out whether a liberty is real is to look for the fight that left it behind.

Carthage lets us do this with unusual precision, because in two cases the source names the quarrel.

What actually existed

First the inventory, made honestly, because this collection should not underrate it. The counter-levers at Carthage were substantial and they were not decorative.

The assembly held a determining power, not merely a consultative one, and any citizen could speak against a motion. The magistracies were annual and elective, and — a structural protection that is easy to miss — the suffetes did not command armies. Carthage separated the civil headship of the state from military command as a matter of course, which is the single most important institutional fact about it and which Rome, with its consuls, did not do. There was a standing tribunal that audited the men who did hold armies. Religious obligation was published, itemised and appealable: the sacrificial tariff sets out what each offering costs and provides a penalty for the priest who overcharges. Public speech was extraordinarily free at the top of the register — Bomilcar delivered a catalogue of the state's judicial murders from a cross in the middle of the forum, before a numerous assembly, and was allowed to finish. Magistrates were chosen with an eye to merit as well as to wealth. And there was no garrison in the city, no political police, no register of persons, and no recorded execution of an ordinary Carthaginian citizen for anything but attempted tyranny.

Polybius, looking back from the second century, thought the original design a good one: *The constitution of Carthage seems to me to have been originally well contrived as regards its most distinctive points. For there were kings, and the house of Elders was an aristocratical force, and the people were supreme in matters proper to them, the entire frame of the state much resembling that of Rome and Sparta.*

That is not rhetoric. It is a real list. The module's task is to find out where each item came from and what it was worth.

The first quarrel

For the tribunal, the source names the fight, and the sentence is the most valuable in this module.

Somewhere in the fifth century, after three generations in which the Magonid house had held every important command, the other magnates acted. Justin gives both the motive and the instrument: because *so numerous a family of commanders was dangerous to the liberty of the state, since they themselves managed and decided everything, a hundred judges were chosen out of the senate, who were to demand of the generals, when they returned from war, an account of their proceedings, in order that, under this control, they might exercise their command in war with a regard to the judicature and laws at home.*

Every element of the mechanism is visible in that sentence. A faction of the hierarchy — the magnates who were not Magonids — with standing and means, bargaining from strength against a family that had monopolised the commands. Neither side wanting to destroy the arrangement, since both lived on it. A concession

that takes institutional form rather than personal form: not the removal of a man, but a standing body with a standing power. And then accretion, which is what makes it residue rather than an episode: the tribunal outlived every man who created it and constrained every Carthaginian commander for the next three centuries, including Hannibal.

Now notice exactly whose liberty was secured. Not the peasant's. Not the Libyan's. Not even the ordinary citizen's. The word in Justin's Latin is *libertas*, and what it means here is the liberty of the senatorial order to go on deciding things. **That is what a liberty looks like at the moment of its origin: one faction's protection against another faction, phrased in universal language.** The universal phrasing is not a lie, and it is not incidental either — it is what allows the protection to be argued for in public, and it is the reason such protections can later be claimed by people the original bargain never contemplated.

And then the second half, which is why this is a law rather than a story. By 196 the same body had become what Livy describes: an order holding office for life, before which *the property, reputation and life of everyone were in their power*, in which whoever offended one member acquired a hundred and four enemies and a prosecutor could always be found. A counter-lever built to protect the council from the generals had become an instrument of terror wielded by the men who happened to hold it.

State it plainly, because it applies to every case in this collection: **protections do not stay pointed where they were aimed.** The question to ask of any institutional liberty is not what it was created for but who holds it now, because a durable protection will be captured by whoever ends up sitting in it, and the capture is usually invisible for a generation or two after it happens.

The width of the disagreement

The assembly's power is harder, because no source tells us where it came from, and the honest thing is to say so. But its *shape* tells us what kind of thing it was.

Aristotle's formulation is precise and the precision is the point: when the suffetes and elders are unanimous, they may decide whether to bring a matter to the people at all; only when they disagree does it go down, and then the people decide. So the citizen's determining power exists exactly and only in the gap between the factions above him.

The assembly's liberty was the width of the elite's disagreement. It was not a floor under the citizen and not a right he could invoke. It was a tiebreaker that the governing class reached for when it deadlocked — which is also precisely why it was real rather than ornamental. A tiebreaker that either side could ignore is not a tiebreaker.

Both factions needed the people's verdict to bind, so it bound. That is a genuine liberty, produced by a mechanism that had nothing to do with anybody's principles, and it is worth having exactly as much as the elite is divided.

Which explains a passage that has puzzled readers for two thousand years. Polybius, comparing the two states at the outbreak of the Hannibalic war, judges Carthage to have decayed and gives his reason: *Consequently the multitude at Carthage had already acquired the chief voice in deliberations; while at Rome the senate still retained this; and hence, as in one case the masses deliberated and in the other the most eminent men, the Roman decisions on public affairs were superior.*

Read that through the mechanism and it stops being a moral judgement and becomes a measurement. The period Polybius is describing is the forty years in which the Barcid house and the faction of Hanno the Great were in permanent, unresolved conflict over Spain, over the war, over the peace and over the revenues. The elite was split more or less continuously — so the tiebreaker was in continuous use, and the people's weight rose accordingly. Polybius calls that decline. From the framework's side it is the ordinary mechanism of enlargement operating at full stretch, and the fact that the ancient world's most acute constitutional analyst read a widening settlement as a pathology tells us something about whose account of liberty we have inherited.

The last quarrel, and what it cost the winner

The clearest single instance of the residue mechanism in this entire collection happens at Carthage in 196, and Livy reports it from beginning to end within a few paragraphs.

Hannibal, newly elected suffete, summoned the quaestor before him. The man did not come — he belonged to the other faction and, since quaestors were customarily promoted into the order of judges, he behaved like someone already promoted. Hannibal sent an officer to arrest him, brought him before the assembly, and denounced not the individual but the entire order, *whose insolence and excessive power utterly subverted the laws and the authority of the magistrates who had to enforce them*. And then, Livy says, seeing that his words were making a favourable impression and that the danger of that order was being recognised, *he at once proposed and carried a law enacting that the judges should be elected annually and that none should hold office for two consecutive years*.

There is the whole model in one afternoon. A faction; a factional fight over a personal slight that is really a fight about power; a bargaining position built out of something else entirely — Hannibal had just audited the revenues and spared the citizens a direct tax, which is why the assembly was listening; a concession that takes the

form of an institution rather than a favour; and a genuine constitutional change to the tenure of the most powerful body in the state, obtained by a popular vote.

And immediately, the price. *Whatever popularity, however, he gained amongst the masses by his action was counterbalanced by the offence given to a large number of the aristocracy.* Within the year the men whose life tenure he had abolished and whose peculation he had exposed had written to Rome, a Roman commission had arrived, and Hannibal had ridden out of Carthage in the dark to a waiting ship.

Both halves belong to the finding, and neither should be softened. The residue accreted — the tenure of the judges was changed by law, in public, on a popular vote. And the man who deposited it was destroyed by the men he took it from, within months, using a foreign power. **Liberties are real, they are made in factional fights, and their authors usually pay.** Whether the reform outlived him we do not know; the record goes quiet, and this study will not guess.

The "in" and the "out"

Now the boundary, which returns one finding in Carthage's favour and one that is very much not.

In its favour: the Carthaginian "in" was drawn by money rather than by birth. Aristotle disliked this intensely and named it precisely — the highest offices bought, wealth made of more account than virtue, the whole state grown avaricious. But look at what he is describing from the other side. A man who made a fortune in the Spanish trade could buy into the governing class in a way that no amount of money would have accomplished at Sparta or in a lineage aristocracy. That is a genuine, if unlovely, permeability, and it is very likely part of why Carthage escaped the factional bloodletting that consumed the Greek cities. An oligarchy of wealth has a door in it. An oligarchy of blood does not.

Against it: in four hundred years, below the citizen body, nobody was ever let in. No Libyan community was enfranchised. No Libyphoenician town was raised to citizenship, although its men were legally obliged to serve. No manumission scheme produced citizens in numbers anyone recorded. Not one subject population, at any point, was brought inside.

The test the framework prescribes is exact: where anyone below the governing class is admitted, look for the factional fight that made it worth somebody's while. Carthage returns a clean null. There was one moment when the "out" extracted a formal concession, and it is instructive. In 241, with a mutinous professional army holding Tunis and the whole countryside in revolt, the mutineers raised their demands and required that payment be extended beyond the foreign troops to the Libyan conscripts,

the Numidians, and the escaped slaves who had joined them; and Carthage, having no choice at all, agreed to everything. Then it won the war, retook the towns, and crucified the men who had asked.

A concession extracted at the point of a sword by a faction that is not inside the settlement is not residue. It is a ransom, and ransoms are recovered.

Why did no Carthaginian faction ever find it worth its while? Module 2 supplies the answer and it is arithmetic rather than malice. Every faction in the Carthaginian hierarchy was financed the same way — by the extraction of a quarter of the harvest from populations outside the settlement, by offices bought and recouped from provinces, and by the panacea of seating poor citizens on subject towns. Barcid and anti-Barcid, war party and peace party, judge and general and priest: all of them drew from the same source. A faction fighting for advantage against another faction reaches for whatever weapon is to hand, and admitting the subjects was never a weapon, because it would have cost the man who reached for it more than winning was worth. **The foreclosure was total not because anyone decided it but because no faction had a use for the alternative.**

Plurality that was not contestability

Which brings the module to its central correction, and it is a correction of Aristotle.

He called Carthage a mixed constitution and admired the balance, and on the institutions he was entirely right. Suffetes, a council of elders, an assembly with a determining power, a tribunal of a hundred and four, boards of five holding the continuing business, generals, priesthoods — genuinely plural, genuinely competing, genuinely able to block one another, and demonstrably willing to. Aristotle was not describing a façade.

But Module 3 established the fact that decides what all of it amounted to. The interpreter class at Carthage *was* the governing class. The priest, the judge, the suffete and the general were drawn from the same pool of families, and one man could be several of them; the dedicant of a tophet stele records his father's high magistracy and his grandfather's suffeteship beside his vow. Every one of those competing institutions recruited from a single class.

So the plurality was horizontal, within one class, and not vertical, across classes — and that distinction decides everything. **Institutions that compete but recruit from one class produce competition, not contestability.** They will check each other ferociously on any question where the class is divided, which is why Carthaginian political life was so vigorous and why the assembly's tiebreaking power was real. And they will produce not one check on any question where the class agrees, which is why

four centuries of energetic constitutional life generated not a single motion to widen the settlement. There was nobody in any of those rooms whose position depended on widening it.

The framework's three-monopoly test makes this exact. Genuine contestability requires that at least one of force, wealth and trusted information be held by people who do not hold the others — because a counterweight has to grow on something, and it can only grow on a monopoly the incumbents do not own. At Carthage the same families held all three. There was no clerisy with independent authority, no scriptural tradition that could be quoted against a magistrate, no armed class with its own claims, no second order with its own magistrates. The counterweight had nowhere to root.

The inversion

One last observation, because it runs against the expectation this collection usually carries and it is well evidenced.

The best-protected person in Carthage was an ordinary citizen. He paid no direct tax. He could speak in the assembly and oppose a motion, and his opposition had to be answered. He could hold a priest to a published price and see him fined. He lived under no garrison, no political police, no register. And no ordinary Carthaginian citizen is recorded as having been executed by the state for anything except attempting to seize it.

The worst-protected person in Carthage was the man at the top of it. A general faced a life-tenured tribunal in which every member was a standing prosecutor; verdicts could be reached, sealed in an urn and left unread until it was safe to open them; the penalty for losing a battle was a cross in the forum, and it was applied. The most famous man in the Mediterranean, having been elected head of state and having won a public vote against the judges, was a fugitive within a year.

Liberty is not distributed monotonically with rank. In an order whose only structural danger comes from its own coordinating class, protections accumulate at the base and terror accumulates at the top, because that is where the arrangement's risk actually lives. It is a stable configuration and Module 8 showed it holding for four centuries. It is also the reason Carthage could never solve its general problem, since no state can simultaneously want its commanders bold and want them frightened.

Reading liberty against the framework

Four findings.

Protections do not stay pointed where they were aimed. The Hundred and Four was created by one faction, against another, to secure the liberty of the senatorial order

— and within three centuries it was the instrument before which every man's property, reputation and life stood, and the principal obstacle to reform of the revenues. Any liberty durable enough to matter will be captured by whoever ends up holding it. The diagnostic follows: **ask not what a protection was for, but who holds it now**, because the answer changes and the language does not.

A liberty produced as a tiebreaker is exactly as wide as the elite's disagreement. The Carthaginian assembly's determining power was real, binding, and used — and it existed only in the gap between the suffetes and the elders, expanding when the governing class split and contracting when it did not. That is not a lesser kind of liberty; for most of history it is the only kind there is. But it means the citizen's power was a function of a variable he did not control, and it means Polybius was measuring something true when he complained that the multitude at Carthage had come to have the chief voice — he was measuring forty years of Barcid quarrel, and calling the widening of the settlement a decay.

Plurality is not contestability where the plural institutions recruit from one class. This is the module's main contribution and it corrects the ancient world's best constitutional analyst on his own material. The test is not how many bodies can block one another, nor how vigorously they do it, but whether the three monopolies are held by different people. Carthage had competing institutions and a single ruling class, and the result was a constitution capable of enormous internal friction and incapable of admitting anyone.

And the foreclosure test returns a clean null. In four hundred years no faction of the Carthaginian hierarchy ever found it worth its while to bring a subject inside, because every faction — Barcid and Hannonian, judge and general, priest and merchant — was financed by the same extraction from the same excluded populations. Where the factions all draw from one source, the fight between them can deposit protections for *themselves* indefinitely and will never deposit one for anybody else. That is the deepest reason the assembly's liberty, genuine as it was, could never become anybody's but the citizens'. And it is the reason a state whose constitution Aristotle preferred to Sparta's, and which enjoyed four centuries of real if narrow political freedom, went into its last war with a population of subjects who had no reason on earth to defend it.

A note on sources. The exact quotations are public-domain primary material. Aristotle on the assembly's determining power and the right of any citizen to oppose, on the purchase of the highest offices, and on the boards of five, is quoted from Benjamin Jowett's translation of *Politics* 2.11; Aristotle wrote around 340 from informants, never visited Carthage, and had a comparative thesis to advance, and those

limits apply to everything drawn from him here. Polybius on the original excellence of the Carthaginian constitution and on the multitude having acquired the chief voice by the time of the Hannibalic war is quoted from Evelyn Shuckburgh's translation of *Histories* 6.51; Polybius was writing in Rome for a Roman-facing audience and his judgement that popular predominance constitutes decay is his own and is treated in the body as evidence about the writer as well as about Carthage. Justin on the creation of the hundred judges because a family of commanders was dangerous to the liberty of the state is quoted from John Selby Watson's translation of *Epitome* 19.2 and rests on Justin alone. Livy on the life tenure and powers of the order of judges, on Hannibal's arrest of the quaestor and denunciation of the order before the assembly, on the law making the judges annual with a bar on consecutive terms, and on the offence this gave the aristocracy, is quoted from the Rev. Canon Roberts translation of *Ab Urbe Condita* 33.46; Livy wrote two centuries after the events from sources sympathetic to Hannibal and hostile to the Carthaginian oligarchy. The mutineers' demand in 241 that payment be extended to the Libyan conscripts, Numidians and escaped slaves, and Carthage's agreement to it, is from Polybius 1.66–69 and is reported from the standard summaries rather than quoted. The sacrificial tariff's penalty on a priest who overcharges is from KAI 69 / CIS I 165 and was quoted in Module 4. Bomilcar's speech from the cross is at Justin 22.7. Whether Hannibal's reform of the judges' tenure survived his exile is not recorded in any surviving source, and that silence is stated in the body rather than filled. The claim that no Carthaginian citizen is recorded as executed by the state except for attempted tyranny is an argument from a fragmentary record and is offered as such.

THEY WENT ON RENDERING THE SAME SHARE

Module 10 · change and collapse — the largest rising in Carthaginian history changed nothing, two exhaustions produced no repricing, and the settlement was finally ended by a vote taken in a room in Italy

Begin with 241, because Carthage supplies one of the cleanest tests in the corpus of the proposition that structural change does not come from below.

The rising of that year was not a peasant jacquerie. It began with twenty thousand professional soldiers — Iberian, Celtic, Ligurian, Balearic, Greek and Libyan — who had just fought Rome for twenty-three years, who had officers, a command structure, and a treasury seized from the Carthaginian negotiator. Its leaders were an escaped Roman slave and a Libyan who held a commission in the Carthaginian army. Polybius puts the African reinforcements at seventy thousand, with provisions and money, and says almost the whole of Carthaginian Africa came over. They took Tunis. They besieged Carthage. They held the countryside for the better part of three years, and for a period the state's writ ran to the walls and no further.

They also extracted a formal concession, and it is worth recording because it is the only one on the books: at the height of their leverage the mutineers demanded that payment be extended beyond the foreign troops to the Libyan conscripts, the Numidians and the escaped slaves who had joined them, and Carthage, having no alternative, agreed to all of it.

And then Hamilcar Barca trapped the rebel field army in a pass, starved it, took its leaders under a pretext, and massacred the rest. Spendius and his officers were crucified in sight of Tunis. Mathos was taken and tortured to death in a Carthaginian triumph. The towns were retaken one by one.

Now look at the settlement afterwards. The Libyan assessment: unchanged. Libyan conscription: unchanged. Enfranchisement of any subject community: none. Representation, protection, appeal: none. The concession extracted at swordpoint was recovered along with the towns. Two hundred and forty-one is what a maximal rising looks like — better armed, better led, better financed and more numerous than almost any popular rising in the ancient record — and the arrangement did not move by a single acre.

The reason is not obscure and it is the whole of the framework's law. The floor did not crack. Carthage still had money, still had a fleet, still had citizens on its walls, still had elephants, and still had a commander who knew his trade. An armed settlement is alterable only by organised force, and when the organised force on the other side is intact, the number of angry men on this side is a fact about the casualty list and not about the outcome.

The four cracks, tested

So if the arrangement was ever going to move, it had to move through the floor. Run the four mechanisms against six centuries of Carthaginian record.

Fracture. The elite fractured repeatedly and, in three cases, armed people against itself: Malchus brought an army home in the sixth century, Hanno the *princeps* raised twenty thousand armed slaves in the fourth, and Bomilcar moved in 308 with five hundred citizens and a thousand mercenaries. Every one failed. But the more important observation is that none of them would have produced structural change even if it had succeeded, because each was a bid to occupy the existing chair rather than to alter the arrangement around it. Malchus took the city, executed ten senators, and *restored the laws*. Bomilcar wanted the tyranny, not a new settlement.

That is worth stating as a refinement, because the fracture mechanism is easy to over-apply: **a fracture that produces a rival claimant to the same chair produces no structural change.** The framework's fracture crack works by one faction needing the common man badly enough to arm and pay him — which requires that the faction have no other source of strength. No Carthaginian faction was ever in that position, because every faction could finance itself from the same subject populations and hire the same professionals. They could all afford not to need anybody.

The single exception is 196, and it is exactly as large as the mechanism predicts. Hannibal, having audited the revenues and spared the citizens a tax, went to the assembly against the order of judges and carried a law ending their life tenure. Real fracture, real popular weight deployed by one faction against another, real institutional residue. And within the year the losing faction reversed it by reaching for the third mechanism — a foreign power — and the man who had made the change was riding out of the country in the dark.

Exhaustion. Carthage was exhausted twice, and neither exhaustion produced a repricing. This is the module's first real finding, because on the framework's model it should have.

After 241 the state was carrying an indemnity of thirty-two hundred talents, had just lost Sicily, had lost its army, and had watched its entire African hinterland rise.

Every condition for a widening was present: an exhausted elite, a floor visibly cracked, and a population whose loyalty had just been demonstrated to be worthless. Carthage did not widen the settlement. It went to Spain.

That decision is the whole of it. Rather than reprice the Libyans — reduce the assessment, admit the towns, buy the countryside's loyalty with anything at all — Hamilcar Barca built a new revenue base a thousand miles away, out of silver mines and Iberian levies. Within twenty years Spain was supplying the money, the men and the strategic initiative, and Africa was still paying a quarter of its crop under exactly the old arrangement.

An order with an available frontier can substitute expansion for repricing. That is an addition the four-crack model needs, because it names the condition under which exhaustion fails to produce widening: the exhausted elite does not have to deal anybody in if it can find somebody new to extract from instead. And the substitution is not merely cheaper — it is preferred, because a new province costs the settlement nothing while a widened settlement costs every member of it something.

After 201 the frontier was gone: Spain lost, the fleet surrendered, an indemnity of ten thousand talents over fifty years. Now the repricing should have been unavoidable. And what actually happened, in 196, is instructive precisely because of what it left out. Hannibal audited the revenues, recovered the embezzlement, reformed the tenure of the judges — and announced, as the reform's chief selling point, that the indemnity could be met *without any tax falling on individual citizens*. The exhausted state repriced its own magistrates and protected its own citizens. The Libyans were not mentioned.

Why not? Because the exhaustion mechanism only produces a widening when the exhausted elite *needs the excluded population's bodies*. Britain enfranchised its working men in 1918 because it had just required them to die by the million and would require it again. Carthage had spent six centuries arranging not to need anybody: buying professionals, conscripting subjects it did not have to persuade, hiring a Spartan when it needed generalship, and manning its fleet from a citizen body that was already inside the settlement. **An order that has systematically arranged not to depend on its subjects has no reason to pay them when it is exhausted — which means it forgoes the one internal mechanism that might have widened it in time.** The instruments of Modules 1, 4 and 5 return their bill here, all at once, in the one generation when a wider settlement might have mattered.

Overbreeding. Test it, and the answer is negative, and Aristotle names the reason. Carthage did not accumulate a surplus of unseated elite claimants because the empire absorbed them: portions of the people were enriched in rotation by being sent out to

the dependencies, which is precisely the safety valve that prevents elite overproduction. When the dependencies were lost after 201 that mechanism must have begun to bind — a shrinking empire with an undiminished class of claimants is the classic overbreeding configuration — but Rome arrived before the pressure could do any work. The crack that might have opened never had time to.

Conquest. Which leaves the fourth, and it fired completely.

Who decided

The end of Carthage was decided by an argument inside the Roman elite, and this is the fact that most needs stating plainly, because it locates the agency exactly where the framework says it will be and nowhere near where the popular story looks.

Cato the Elder returned from an embassy to Africa, produced fresh figs in the senate house to show how close and how rich the place was, and thereafter ended every speech on every subject with the same clause. Scipio Nasica argued the other way, and argued it on structural grounds — that Rome needed a rival to keep it disciplined. Neither of them was responding to any Carthaginian action, any Carthaginian threat, or any change in Carthaginian conduct. They were arguing about what was good for Rome.

The trigger, when it came, was a client. Masinissa had spent fifty years taking Carthaginian districts, protected by the peace terms of 201 which forbade Carthage to make war without Roman permission — an instrument that made every Numidian encroachment unanswerable. In 150 the Carthaginians finally fought him at Oroscopa and lost, and the fighting itself was the treaty breach.

The instrument was the sequence examined in Module 7: the grant that named the laws, the territory, the sanctuaries, the tombs, the freedom and the property, and did not name the city; then the three hundred hostages; then the two hundred thousand weapons and two thousand catapults; then the order to abandon the site.

And one arithmetical fact belongs here without commentary. The last instalment of the indemnity was paid in 152. The war was declared in 149. While Carthage was paying, Rome was a creditor with an interest in Carthaginian solvency. The month it finished paying, it became simply a rich competitor across a narrow sea.

The most consequential political question in the history of the Carthaginian order — whether it would continue to exist — was settled by a vote in a room in Italy, among men arguing about their own city's interests, over a quarrel started by a Numidian king. Nobody in Carthage was consulted, and nothing anyone in Carthage did after 152 altered the outcome.

What the population did

Now the hardest part for the thesis, because for three years the Carthaginian people behaved exactly as the flattering story says people behave, and it made no difference whatever.

When the final demand came, the peace faction in Carthage was overturned by the war faction and the city refused. What followed is one of the most complete popular mobilisations in ancient history. Appian describes a population turning the town into an arsenal, producing on the order of three hundred swords, five hundred spears, a hundred and forty shields and a thousand catapult bolts a day; the temples and public buildings converted to workshops; women cutting their hair for bowstrings. When Scipio Aemilianus built a mole across the harbour mouth, the Carthaginians dug a new channel from the naval harbour to the open sea by hand, at night, with the labour of women and children, and brought out a fleet nobody knew they had.

That is a whole people fighting with total commitment for its own existence, unarmed at the start, having surrendered two hundred thousand weapons, and it bought three years.

And then the walls were breached and it made no difference at all. The Romans came in through the harbour quarter and had to take the city street by street, house by house, through buildings six storeys high, using captured houses as platforms to attack the next; Scipio kept fresh troops in the line by relay while the defenders could not; he burned the houses with the defenders in them; the streets had to be cleared of bodies before the advance could continue. Six days of this brought the Byrsa. Nine hundred survivors, mostly Roman deserters who could expect no mercy, burned in the temple of Eshmun. Hasdrubal came out and surrendered himself; his wife killed their children in front of the Romans and went into the fire. Perhaps fifty thousand people came out under a truce and were sold into slavery.

There was no rising. No faction opened the gates. No popular movement demanded terms. No liberation of anybody by anybody. The people did not overthrow their rulers and were not freed from them; they fought beside them for three years and were then sold.

Say it once and without heat, because it is the point the flattering story cannot accommodate: **when this settlement ended, the people of Africa did not rise up and throw off a yoke and declare liberty.** The largest, best-armed, best-led rising they ever mounted, in 241, had been crushed and changed nothing. The final defence, in which they gave everything they had, was defeated by better engineering. And the settlement was ended by an army from another continent, on the instructions of an assembly they had never seen.

What changed, and what did not

The change, where it came, was total — for exactly one class.

The Carthaginian coordinating class was annihilated. The senate, the hundred and four, the suffetes, the priesthoods, the merchant houses, the families whose names had been cut on tophet stelae for six centuries: killed, sold, or dispersed. That is what conquest does, and in the whole of this study it is the only mechanism that ever did it. Four hundred years of coups, mutinies, invasions, risings and defeats had not removed one of those families from its position. A Roman army removed all of them in a fortnight.

Now go down the levels and watch the change attenuate.

The estates were not dissolved. They were transferred: declared *ager publicus*, then held by local, Roman and Italian occupiers, and regulated two generations later by the agrarian law of 111. The technique was preserved on purpose — Mago's twenty-eight books translated into Latin at public expense while the rest of the libraries were given away, because the new owners needed to know how to run the presses and the herds. The Libyan cultivator went on cultivating, and went on rendering a share of the harvest, and the share went to a different capital. The language survived: Punic was still spoken in the African countryside when Augustine was bishop of Hippo, four and a half centuries later. The gods survived, renamed Saturn and Caelestis, worshipped by Berber-descended populations across the interior. The Carthaginian magistracy survived — Punic *shofets* still sitting in African towns under Roman administration.

Conquest replaces the apex completely and the base almost not at all. The deeper into an order one goes, the less a conquest changes, which is why the most violent of the four mechanisms is frequently the least consequential for the people at the bottom of it. The men who died in the streets of the Byrsa had everything taken. The man in the Bagradas who never saw a Roman that year had a new landlord and the same quarter of his crop.

Scipio's tears

One scene closes the module, and it is preserved because a historian was standing next to the man it happened to.

Scipio, when he looked upon the city as it was utterly perishing and in the last throes of its complete destruction, is said to have shed tears and wept openly for his enemies. After being wrapped in thought for long, and realizing that all cities, nations, and authorities must, like men, meet their doom; that this happened to Ilium, once a prosperous city, to the empires of Assyria, Media, and Persia, the greatest of their time, and to Macedonia

itself, the brilliance of which was so recent, either deliberately or the verses escaping him, he said: "A day will come when sacred Troy shall perish, And Priam and his people shall be slain". And when Polybius speaking with freedom to him, for he was his teacher, asked him what he meant by the words, they say that without any attempt at concealment he named his own country, for which he feared when he reflected on the fate of all things human.

Read it structurally rather than sentimentally. The man who had just executed the destruction understood the mechanism completely, and what he understood was not that empires are wicked but that an armed settlement ends in exactly one way — when a stronger armed settlement comes and takes it apart. He had watched Carthage survive a rising of its whole countryside, two exhausting wars, four centuries of attempted coups, and a mutiny of its own army, and had concluded, correctly, that none of those things had ever been going to end it, and that what he had just done was the only thing that ever would. Then he applied the finding to Rome.

The teacher he said it to is the historian this study has been quoting for ten modules on the decay of constitutions.

Reading collapse against the framework

Five findings.

Two hundred and forty-one is the control case, and it confirms the law at the strongest available setting. This was not a peasant rising against a state; it was a veteran professional army with officers and a treasury, joined by an entire subject population, holding the field for three years and reaching the capital's walls. It failed, its leaders were crucified, and the settlement did not move. When the floor is intact, the quality and quantity of the anger on the other side is a fact about the casualty list.

A fracture that produces a rival claimant to the same chair produces no structural change. Carthaginian coups were bids to occupy the arrangement, not to alter it — Malchus took the city and restored the laws. The fracture mechanism requires a faction that needs the common man badly enough to pay him, and no Carthaginian faction was ever short enough of other resources to need him. This is the shadow side of the default: an elite whose every member can finance himself from subjects is an elite that never has to deal anybody in, in victory or in defeat.

A frontier can substitute for a repricing, and where one is available it will be preferred. This is the module's principal addition to the four-crack model. In 241 Carthage met a textbook exhaustion — indemnity, lost army, risen countryside — and answered it not by widening the settlement but by conquering Spain. Expansion costs the settlement nothing; widening costs every member of it something. **Where an**

exhausted elite has somewhere new to extract from, exhaustion will not produce admission, and the crack the framework expects simply does not open.

And exhaustion produces widening only where the elite needs the excluded population's bodies. After 201 the frontier was gone and the repricing still did not come, because Carthage had spent six hundred years building an order that did not depend on the people it ruled. It bought its specialists, conscripted subjects it never had to persuade, hired foreign generals, and manned its fleet from inside the settlement. That arrangement was rational at every step and it was cheap for centuries — and it meant that when the state finally needed a reason for its subjects to fight for it, it had never built one and could not now afford to. The instruments that made the order cheap are the same instruments that left it with nothing to concede.

Conquest replaces the apex completely and the base almost not at all. The Carthaginian governing class was erased in a fortnight after four centuries in which nothing had removed a single family from it. Below that class, the change attenuates at every level: the estates transferred rather than dissolved, the agronomy deliberately preserved, the assessment continuing under a new capital, the language spoken for another five hundred years, the gods renamed, the magistracy still sitting. Which is the last and least comfortable finding of this module. The destruction of Carthage was one of the most complete acts of political annihilation in the ancient world, and for the man who grew the wheat it was a change of landlord. He went on rendering the same share.

A note on sources. The exact quotations are public-domain primary material. Appian's account of Scipio Aemilianus weeping over the burning city, his reflection on Ilium, Assyria, Media, Persia and Macedon, his two lines of Homer, and Polybius's question and Scipio's answer, is quoted from the White translation of the *Punica*; Appian wrote in the second century AD but here preserves the report of Polybius, who was present as Scipio's teacher and whose own text at 38.22 survives only in fragments. Livy's phrase on meeting Rome's demands without any tax falling on individual citizens is from the Rev. Canon Roberts translation of 33.47. The events of the Mercenary War — the twenty thousand mutineers, Polybius's figure of seventy thousand African reinforcements, the extension of the demanded payments to Libyan conscripts, Numidians and escaped slaves, the trapping and massacre of the rebel army, and the crucifixion of Spendius and the death of Mathos — are from Polybius 1.65–88 and are reported from the standard summaries rather than quoted; the figures are Polybius's. The narrative of the final siege — the mole across the harbour mouth, the channel cut by hand, the daily production of arms, the street fighting through six-storey houses, the relay of fresh troops, the burning of the Byrsa, the nine hundred in

the temple of Eshmun, Hasdrubal's surrender and his wife's death, and the fifty thousand sold — follows Appian's *Punica*, the fullest surviving account, supplemented by the standard modern reconstructions. Appian is Roman-facing, wrote three centuries after the events, and his figures should be treated as impressions of scale rather than counts; the population of Carthage before the siege is variously estimated and no reliable figure exists, so none is given here. The tradition that the site was sown with salt has no ancient attestation and is a modern invention; it is noted and set aside. Cato's figs and his repeated closing formula, and Scipio Nasica's opposition, follow Plutarch and the standard accounts and are paraphrased. The dating of the final indemnity payment to 152, of Oroscopa to 150, and of the declaration of war to 149 follows the standard chronology. The subsequent history of the land — its declaration as *ager publicus* and the agrarian law of 111 — the Senate's commission to translate Mago, the survival of spoken Punic to Augustine's time, the reappearance of Baal Hammon and Tanit as Saturn and Caelestis, and the continuation of Punic *shofets* in African towns under Rome, are drawn from the standard scholarship and are paraphrased; each was established with its sources in the earlier modules of this study.

HIMERA WAS NEVER REBUILT

Module 11 · the grim accounting — six centuries of an armed settlement's bill, who paid it, why the men it paid forgot how it was made, and why the most complete political annihilation in the ancient west produced almost no famine

An order that lasts long enough stops looking like a thing that was made. The violence that established it recedes past living memory, then past anybody's grandfather's memory, and what remains is simply how the world is arranged — the fields belong to the families who have always held them, the assessment is what one renders, and nobody living had anything to do with the decision.

At Carthage this had happened by the fourth century, and it is worth measuring how completely. A Carthaginian magnate in 350, walking out to a stuccoed villa in the Bagradas, lived in a world where Carthaginian ownership of the best arable in Africa was a fact of nature. The annual rent his city had once paid to Libyan landlords for the ground it stood on was four hundred years behind him — as far behind him as the Norman Conquest is behind a modern Englishman — and the wars that cancelled it had been fought by men whose great-grandsons were long dead. The tradition survives only because a Roman epitomator preserved it. There is no sign that any Carthaginian remembered it as anything but an old story about the founding, filed beside the ox-hide and the omens.

But the forgetting was not general, and this is the first finding of the module. The Libyan cultivator did not forget, and the reason is not that his memory was better. It is that for him the arrangement was not a background condition but a bill presented every harvest. Diodorus, explaining why the countryside rose in 396, does not reach for any recent grievance: the allies, he says, *had long hated the oppressive rule of the Carthaginians*. Long. The men who came out that year with two hundred thousand between them had not forgotten anything.

Naturalisation is asymmetric, and it tracks the benefit column. An order becomes the furniture of reality fastest for the people it pays, and slowest — or not at all — for the people it charges, because being charged is a recurring event and being paid feels like the ordinary condition of things. Which means the framework's forgetting is not a function of elapsed time but of position, and it explains something that would otherwise look like carelessness: a settlement can appear entirely naturalised from the top, with four centuries of stability behind it and a philosopher calling it one

of the three best-governed states in the world, while sitting one coordinating instrument away from a rising of everybody underneath.

The ledger of the sword

Now the accounting, which has to be set out by category, and with a warning attached to every figure. Every number below comes from a hostile source, none is a count, and the Carthaginian records that might have checked them were destroyed in 146. What follows is an order of magnitude, not an audit.

Against the Greeks of Sicily. This is the largest single item in Carthage's ledger and it is almost entirely absent from the way Carthage is remembered. In 409 a Carthaginian army stormed Selinus and razed it, sparing, on Diodorus' account, only the women who had taken sanctuary in the temples and those citizens who had been outside the walls; the rest were killed in the sack. The same army then took Himera and destroyed it, and its commander had three thousand prisoners brought to the spot where his grandfather had died seventy-one years before and killed them there. Mass graves associated with both battles at Himera were excavated between 2008 and 2011 and corroborate the literary record. In the campaigns that followed, Akragas, Gela and Camarina were taken in turn.

Himera was never rebuilt. Selinus never recovered its scale. Set that beside the standard picture of Carthage as a trading power and the correction is stark: **Carthage extinguished a group of Greek cities in Sicily about as completely as Rome would later extinguish Carthage, and the only reason this does not shape our picture of it is that the Sicilian Greek archive survived and the Punic one did not.** Ledgers persist by the accident of whose records live.

Against the Libyans. Four centuries of assessment enforced by garrisons; the wars of the sixth and fifth centuries that cancelled the ground-rent by force; the suppression of the rising of 396; and then the Mercenary War, which Polybius called truceless and which was fought at a level of atrocity both sides deliberately engineered. Diodorus records the rebel leaders' decree that captured Carthaginians be killed outright and that captured allies of Carthage have their hands cut off and be sent back mutilated — done, he says explicitly, to destroy Hamilcar's policy of leniency and make surrender impossible for their own men. Carthage answered in kind: the rebel field army massacred to the last man at the Saw, its leaders crucified in sight of Tunis, Mathos tortured to death in a triumph.

Against the Iberians. The conquest of Spain from 237 was a war of subjection lasting twenty years, in which Hamilcar Barca made a policy of crucifying captured chieftains while releasing their warriors, and it ended with an entire peninsula

supplying men and silver. Pliny preserves the human texture of the silver: men standing in a tunnel a mile and a half into a mountain, baling water in shifts timed by torchlight so that other men could cut ore.

Against its own commanders. A cross in the forum, on the record, roughly once a generation for four hundred years.

Against its own children. The precinct north of the harbour: something over twenty thousand urns across six centuries, and — on the current weight of specialist opinion, which is not unanimous — a sacrificial rite. And in the crisis of 310, on Diodorus' report, two hundred children of the leading families given up publicly in a single day, with not fewer than three hundred more offered voluntarily.

Against its own citizens. The Sacred Band destroyed at the Crimissus in 341 or 339 and again outside Tunis in 310; the army lost at Himera in 480; and finally 146.

Against Rome, and against itself in the attempt. The Punic Wars are conventionally accounted to Rome's ledger and half of them belong here. Twenty-three years, then seventeen, then three. Cannae. Fifteen years of Italy fought over. And the sea: after the evacuation of Africa in 255 a Roman fleet was destroyed by a summer storm off Camarina, and Polybius reports the loss of the great majority of a fleet of several hundred warships together with three hundred transports and more than a hundred thousand men — a figure that is disputed, that no modern scholar can verify, and that if anywhere near right makes it the largest single loss of life at sea in recorded history. It was a consequence of a war Carthage was fighting.

And the end. Three years of siege, six days of street fighting, the Byrsa burned with defenders inside the houses, and some fifty thousand survivors sold.

The honest summary is unremarkable and should be stated as such. This was an armed settlement for six hundred years, and its accounting is what an armed settlement's accounting always is: very large, mostly unrecorded, and disproportionately borne by people who had no part whatever in the decisions that produced it.

The metabolic note, and where it was called

The second ledger runs on a different principle and has to be set out carefully, because it is easy to confuse with the first.

An advanced agrarian order lifts its population above what the ground would carry on its own. It does this through coordination: irrigation channels that must be maintained, seed stock that must be kept, storage that must be guarded, terracing, drainage, the organisation of labour at harvest, and the accumulated knowledge of when and what to plant on which soil. That coordination is a real, physical asset and it

is fragile. Destroy it — by conquest, by revolution, by the collapse of the authority that maintained it — and the population falls back toward the land's natural carrying capacity. The fall is not paid in battle deaths. It is paid in famine and epidemic, over years, mostly by people who never saw a soldier.

Carthage called that note twice, both times on other people.

In Sicily. Himera was never rebuilt, and that phrase means more than the loss of a name. It means the terracing, the storage, the market, the water management and the population that maintained all of them, extinguished together. Carthage destroyed those cities because it wanted rivals gone, not because it wanted their output, and when a conqueror does not want the output he has no reason to preserve the machinery.

On itself, at the end. The siege of 149–146 was a deliberate metabolic operation. Scipio built a mole across the harbour mouth precisely to stop supplies reaching a population penned behind walls, and Appian describes the resulting starvation. Whatever the city's population was — the ancient figures are impossible and the modern estimates vary widely — the note was called on it in full, and much of it was paid before the walls were breached.

And a related item belongs here even though it is not agricultural. Carthaginian armies were repeatedly destroyed by epidemic disease: at Akragas in 406, where the commander himself died of it, and again outside Syracuse in 396, where the besieging army was annihilated. That second epidemic is the direct cause of the Libyan rising of the same year, because it destroyed the floor of force and the countryside came out the moment the news arrived. Disease is a cost of concentration, and concentration is what an armed settlement does.

The note that was not called

And now the finding, which is the reverse of what a study of the most complete political annihilation in the ancient west would expect to report.

In Africa in 146 the metabolic note was not called. There is no famine in the record, no demographic collapse, no abandonment of the Bagradas. Within a generation the region was a primary grain exporter to Italy; Rome surveyed the former Carthaginian estates into a centuriated grid and worked them; by the imperial period it was said that Africa fed the city of Rome for eight months of the year, with modern estimates putting the annual grain shipment somewhere in the range of 130,000 to 180,000 tonnes. The engine did not stop. It changed hands.

The reason is a decision, and we can name the instrument. Rome wanted the output, understood that the output depended on machinery it did not itself possess, and preserved the machinery on purpose. It gave the Carthaginian libraries away to the

Numidian kings and kept exactly one work — Mago's twenty-eight books on husbandry — which the Senate had translated into Latin at public expense by a senator who knew Punic. It did not deport the cultivators. It did not break up the estates; it transferred them. It left seven Phoenician towns standing with their privileges intact because they had supported Rome. And it left the language, the gods and the local magistracy in place across the countryside, where they can still be found four and five centuries later: Punic spoken in Augustine's diocese, Baal Hammon and Tanit worshipped as Saturn and Caelestis, Punic *shofets* still sitting in African towns.

The metabolic note is called by the destruction of coordination, not by the destruction of rulers — and its size is therefore set by what the conqueror wants. A conqueror who wants the land's product has every incentive to annihilate the apex and preserve the machinery, and if he is competent he will do precisely that. A conqueror who wants the land empty, or who does not understand what makes it productive, calls the note in full and pays for it in a countryside that cannot feed him afterwards.

Carthage in 146 is the cleanest instance in this collection of the first case, and the contrast is available in the same year. Rome sacked Corinth in 146 as well, sold its population, and left the site largely derelict for a century — because Corinth was a rival trading city and its value to Rome was in ceasing to exist. Carthage was destroyed far more thoroughly than Corinth, and the ground behind Carthage went on producing without interruption. The difference is not the ferocity of the conquest. It is entirely a matter of what the conqueror intended to do with the ground the following spring.

Two instruments, then, from one century, marking the two poles: **a farming manual translated at public expense, and a city never rebuilt.**

The ledger from underneath

Bring both accounts together at the level of the man Module 10 followed across the conquest, because that is where the arithmetic actually lands.

Over six hundred years, the account of a cultivator in the Bagradas reads: a quarter of the harvest in an ordinary year and a half in a war year; his sons liable to conscription; two general risings crushed, the second ending in mass crucifixion; no school, no cult sent to him, no route into the settlement, and not one word offered at any point about why any of it was right. Then, in 146, the annihilation of the entire class that had done all of it — after which he went on working the same fields, in the same language, worshipping the same gods under new names, rendering a share of the crop to a different capital.

That is the accounting of an armed settlement seen from underneath, and its most striking feature is how little the great events at the top appear in it. Zama does not appear. Hannibal does not appear. The destruction of the city does not appear except as a change in the address to which the grain was sent.

Reading the accounting against the framework

Four findings.

Naturalisation is asymmetric and tracks the benefit column. The Carthaginian magnate had forgotten that his city once paid rent for its own ground; the Libyan had not forgotten anything, because his version of the arrangement arrived every harvest. The framework's proposition that time turns a built order into the furniture of reality is right, but the variable is not time — it is position. **An order becomes the way the world is fastest for the people it pays.** And a settlement that looks fully naturalised from inside can be, at the same moment, entirely un-naturalised at the bottom and simply unassembled, which is exactly the configuration Module 5 found.

A large share of an armed settlement's sword bill is paid by people outside its own territory, and that share is the part most likely to vanish from the record. Carthage's single largest act of destruction was the extinction of Greek Sicily, not anything it did in Africa — and it is nearly invisible in the modern picture of Carthage because the Sicilian archive survived and the Punic one did not. The general caution follows: **the accounting we can reconstruct is biased toward the violence done by the losers of the last war**, since the winner writes the ledger and the loser's records are the first thing burned.

The metabolic note is called by the destruction of coordination, not the destruction of rulers, and its size is set by the conqueror's intention. This is the module's principal contribution and Carthage supplies both poles within a single century — Himera destroyed because the point was that it should cease to exist, and Africa preserved because the point was the wheat. The framework should ask of every conquest not how violent it was but what the conqueror wanted the ground for afterwards, because that question predicts the famine and the ferocity does not.

And the absence of the note is not a mitigation. This last one has to be stated plainly or the module reads as a consolation, which it is not. The reason Roman Africa did not starve in 145 is the same reason it went on rendering a third of its harvest to a capital across the sea: the coordination was preserved because the extraction depended on it. Competence in a conqueror is genuinely good news about whether the population survives and no news whatever about the terms on which it survives. The manual was translated so that the presses and the herds and the vine rows would go on

working — and they did, under men who had bought the estates at auction from a state that had taken them from men who had taken them from Libyans four hundred years earlier. The note was not called because nobody with power ever wanted it called. That is the whole of the mercy in it.

A note on sources. The exact quotations are public-domain primary material and are few in this module by design, since almost every figure in it is contested. Diodorus Siculus on the Libyan allies who had long hated Carthaginian rule is quoted from the Loeb translation of 14.77 as reproduced in the Perseus text. Diodorus is also the source, at 13.57–62, for the sack of Selinus and the destruction of Himera in 409, including the sparing of the women in the temples and the killing of three thousand prisoners at the site of Hamilcar's death seventy-one years earlier; those passages are reported here rather than quoted, and the figures are his. The mass graves at Himera excavated between 2008 and 2011 are reported from the published archaeology. The rebel decree of the Mercenary War concerning the killing of Carthaginian captives and the mutilation of their allies, and its stated purpose of undermining Hamilcar's leniency, is at Diodorus 25.3 and is paraphrased. Polybius is the source for the truceless character of that war (1.65–88), for the exaction of half the crop from the Libyans in wartime (1.72), and for the loss of the Roman fleet off Camarina in 255 with more than a hundred thousand men (1.37); that last figure is disputed by modern scholars, cannot be verified, and is given here explicitly as Polybius's. Pliny on the water-bearers at Baebelo is from *Natural History* 33.31 in the Bostock and Riley translation, quoted in Module 6. Diodorus 20.14 supplies the two hundred children and the three hundred volunteers of 310. Appian's *Punica* supplies the mole, the blockade and the starvation of the final siege, and the fifty thousand sold. The plagues that destroyed Carthaginian armies at Akragas in 406 and outside Syracuse in 396 are at Diodorus 13.86 and 14.70–71 respectively and are reported. For the aftermath: the centuriation of the former Carthaginian estates, the status of the seven privileged Phoenician towns, and the scale of African grain exports to Rome follow the standard scholarship on Roman Africa; the export figure of roughly 130,000 to 180,000 tonnes a year is a modern estimate for the imperial period and is given as such, not as evidence for the second century BC. The Senate's commission to translate Mago, the disposal of the Carthaginian libraries to the Numidian kings, the survival of spoken Punic to Augustine's time, the persistence of Punic *shofets*, and the reappearance of Baal Hammon and Tanit as Saturn and Caelestis were each established with their sources in earlier modules of this study. The population of Carthage before the siege is not stated here because no reliable figure exists; the ancient numbers are impossible and the modern estimates vary by a factor of

several. Rome's treatment of Corinth in the same year follows the standard accounts and is offered as a contrast rather than as a fully worked case.

THE MEN THEY NEVER NEEDED

Module 12 · convergence and divergence — what Carthage shares with every other order in this collection, what it did differently and why, the one divergence that decided its war with Rome, and the strongest case for the defence stated at full force and answered

Set Carthage beside the other orders in this collection and the surface has almost nothing in common with any of them. A Phoenician trading city on an African peninsula, with no king, no scripture, no priesthood distinct from its merchants, no coinage for four centuries, a religion of published prices and discharged vows, a constitution a Greek philosopher ranked with Sparta's, and an army recruited from four countries. It shares no contact and almost no premises with an Andean sun-empire or a Confucian mandarinate or a Calvinist republic.

And underneath, the same body. A few who did not labour owning the rest: the stuccoed villas of the Bagradas and the quarter of the harvest that paid for them. A floor of organised violence beneath the arrangement, which took two centuries to build and then held for four hundred years. A managed belief above it, cut for the people whose belief was needed and withheld from the people whose belief was not. An interpreter class tending the belief — here fused entirely with the governing class, which is a variation and not an exception. Extraction sorted by caste, in the sharpest form this collection has measured. A default in which each member of the coordinating class defended the whole by defending himself. And change arriving, when it finally arrived, from the elite side and from outside — never from the two hundred thousand who had every reason to want it and no way to assemble.

None of it needed a hidden hand and none of it was designed. The men who beached at the Gulf of Tunis wanted an anchorage on a metals route and paid rent for the ground. Nothing they did was the execution of a plan; every institution this study has examined was somebody solving the problem actually in front of him with the materials actually to hand, and each solution producing the next problem. The tribunal of a hundred and four was invented by magnates who had just been besieged by their own army. The Spanish empire was built by a family for whom Africa had become unsafe. The order that resulted looks designed only in retrospect, and only because the alternatives that failed are not preserved.

What diverged, and where each divergence came from

The framework's claim is that the deep architecture recurs while the surface diverges without end, and that every divergence has a locatable cause in the position rather than in anybody's character. Carthage supplies an unusually complete test, because its divergences are numerous and every one of them traces back to a feature of the founding situation.

The floor came second rather than first — two centuries of settlement, trade and cult with no army in the record at all — because the founders arrived under a lease rather than by conquest and had no land they meant to hold. The metropole supplied a robe and could never supply a floor, because Tyre was itself a tributary of Assyria and then of Babylon and then of Persia, and a city whose king could not open a letter without an Assyrian deputy present cannot garrison anybody. There is no settlement fiction — no vacancy, no recognition, no divisibility — because those instruments launder a taking past an audience that must not see it as a taking, and Carthage had no such audience: the takers were the auditors. The transmission rule was money rather than blood or office because the order began commercial and never stopped being so, which made its oligarchy unusually permeable at the entrance and unusually harsh at the periphery, since a purchased place must be recouped from somewhere outside.

The terror faced upward — crosses for generals, nothing for citizens — because in an order whose base is a shareholder the only structural danger comes from the coordinating class. Liberty accumulated at the base for the same reason. Formation was withheld from the subjects because forming a man is admitting him and the settlement's arithmetic required them outside; but it leaked anyway, because Carthage ruled at close quarters without sealing itself off, and produced a counter-elite fluent in Punic script, Punic magistracies and Punic gods and bound to Carthage by nothing. And the seam ran horizontally, between the order and its commercial rivals rather than between the apex and the ruled, because there was no distant public to deceive — so the classification list contains sailing directions and hull counts and does not contain the rate of the Libyan assessment.

Every one of those is a consequence of where the founders stood, and not one is a fact about Phoenicians.

The divergence that decided the outcome

There is one more, and it is the one that mattered, and the ancient world's best constitutional analyst looked straight at it and reported something else.

Polybius set the two states side by side at the outbreak of the Hannibalic war and gave his verdict: Carthage had declined, and the sign of the decline was that *the multitude at Carthage had already acquired the chief voice in deliberations; while at Rome the senate still retained this*. Two centuries of scholarship have argued about whether he was right that popular influence is decay. He was measuring the wrong variable.

The decisive difference between the two constitutions was not the balance of their organs. It was that Rome had a second class with institutions of its own, and Carthage did not. The Roman plebs won magistrates, an assembly and a veto out of the struggle of the orders by exactly the mechanism Module 9 traced at Carthage — factional quarrels inside a hierarchy, depositing protections that hardened and outlived their authors. But at Rome the protections were deposited into the hands of a class that was *not* the governing class, and once that had happened the structure existed to admit more people. Latins, then Italians, then provincials, then, in the end, everyone.

Carthage's plural institutions all recruited from one pool of families. Four hundred years of vigorous constitutional life, real assemblies, genuine factional warfare, an authentic right of public opposition — and in all of it, not one motion to bring a subject community inside, because no faction had a use for one. Every faction, Barcid and Hannonian alike, was financed by the same excluded populations.

And the test was run in the field, over fifteen years, by the best general of the age.

Hannibal's Italian strategy was a bet on a proposition about Roman subjects, and the proposition came straight from Carthaginian experience. In 396 and again in 241, the moment a formed anti-Carthaginian army appeared inside Carthaginian Africa, the subject population had come over in tens of thousands. Hannibal went to Italy expecting the same, and he could hardly have expected otherwise; it was the only model he had.

Part of the bet paid. After Cannae, Capua and Tarentum and Arpi went over, and the Greek cities of Sicily rose. But the inner ring held, and the way it held is the finding. Not one Latin colony defected in fifteen years. In 209, twelve of the thirty told the consuls through their representatives, in Livy's phrase, that they had no means from which to furnish either men or money — and Livy's own account of their reasoning shows exhausted men, not disloyal ones, complaining that they had been fighting for ten years and were near depopulation. The other eighteen reaffirmed and went on sending. Meanwhile the reinforcements Carthage sent Hannibal across sixteen years in Italy were, on every ancient account, negligible.

That is two admission rules tested against each other under maximum stress. Rome had spent two centuries making men who would fight for it because the arrangement

was, or was visibly becoming, theirs. Carthage had spent six centuries making sure it never had to. When the crisis came, Rome could lose an army and raise another, and Carthage could lose an army and buy another only while the money lasted.

And the divergence traces to the founding position exactly like all the others. Rome was a land power that grew by absorbing neighbours it had to live next to and could not tax at a distance; absorbing them was the cheapest available solution to the problem in front of it. Carthage was a trading post that acquired a hinterland it only ever needed to extract from, and extracting was the cheapest available solution to the problem in front of it. Neither city chose a character. Each solved its problem, and four hundred years later the solutions met in Italy.

What this case returns to the framework

Compactly, because the modules have argued each in place. That the settlement's fictions are a function of a divided audience, so that silence in a record may measure the absence of a constraint rather than the gentleness of a taking. That the recursion of conquered orders has a floor, since some grounds carry no prior apex to seize, and that the newcomer may end by manufacturing one next door. That a metropole can supply a robe and be structurally incapable of supplying a floor. That a robe may be contractual, reading failure as arrears rather than as refutation or faithlessness, and that a priced commutation in its liturgy is evidence the obligation was believed. That formation, where admission is withheld but contact is not, leaks — producing a counter-elite fluent in the ruler's own idiom. That where formation is withheld the community enforcer does not go missing but reverses. That for an unformed subject population the binding constraint is coordination cost rather than deterrence. That a default fails at whichever node the arrangement prices below its outside option, and that the instruments used to police such a node are part of what mispriced it. That relocation to a frontier is a third response alongside desertion and coup, and produces the largest external consequences. That clients are rented nodes and can be outbid. That plurality is not contestability where the plural institutions recruit from one class. That a frontier substitutes for a repricing and will be preferred, and that exhaustion produces widening only where the elite needs the excluded population's bodies. And that the metabolic note is called by the destruction of coordination rather than of rulers, so that its size is set by what the conqueror wants the ground for.

The strongest case for the defence

Now the counter-position, and it deserves to be put at full strength and in its own voice, because a study that cannot state the best case against itself has not tested anything.

The account you have just read is an indictment assembled out of the testimony of the men who burned the archive, and it holds Carthage to a standard that no state in the ancient Mediterranean met — least of all the one that destroyed it and then wrote the record.

Look at what is actually documented. Six hundred years and no tyrant. Four centuries and no civil war that killed citizens in numbers, no proscription, no purge of a defeated faction, nothing remotely like what Athens did at Melos or Syracuse did to itself under its tyrants or Rome did at Corinth. A constitution that Aristotle ranked with Sparta's and Crete's and thought superior to both in one specific respect — that any citizen might rise and oppose a motion, which he says was not permitted in either. Annual elected magistrates. A separation of civil office from military command that Rome never managed and whose absence eventually cost Rome its republic. Ordinary merchants and public officials — the excavators are explicit that this quarter was not an elite one — living in multi-storey houses on a planned grid with private cisterns and drains, which is a standard of living almost nobody in the ancient world had. A published, itemised, appealable schedule of religious dues with a penalty on the priest who overcharged. A city never once taken in six centuries, so that no Carthaginian generation before the last saw an enemy inside its walls.

And a record of practical achievement that Rome itself certified in the most convincing way imaginable. Having resolved to erase the city and having given away its histories, the Senate stopped and legislated to preserve one Carthaginian book, and paid a senator to translate it; Varro and Columella then cited its author as the father of husbandry. Carthaginian ships worked the Atlantic and reached West Africa. Carthaginian shipwrights built hulls from marked, standardised components — the wreck found off Marsala carries the letters. Carthaginian finance carried an indemnity of ten thousand talents without a single direct tax on a citizen, and the audit that proved it possible was conducted in public.

This was among the most competent and internally peaceable states of its world, and it was not destroyed for anything it did. It was destroyed because a faction in a foreign senate concluded that its recovery was intolerable, over a quarrel manufactured by a client king, three years after the last indemnity payment cleared. Scipio Nasica argued against it and lost the vote, and a quarter of a million people were killed or sold on the strength of that division. To set against all of this a ledger of Libyan tribute is to apply a modern

standard to a fourth-century order while relying, for evidence, on the men who sold fifty thousand of its inhabitants in a single morning.

That is the case, and it is a serious one.

The answer

Take the credit first, and take all of it, because every factual claim in that paragraph is true and this study established most of them itself.

The stability was real and it is genuinely rare. The constitutional liberty was real, and Aristotle's comparison holds: the right of any citizen to oppose a motion in public is a substantive protection and Sparta did not have it. The amenity was real and belonged to ordinary people, on the excavators' own testimony. The absence of internal massacre was real. The competence was real, and the translation of Mago is better evidence for it than any amount of praise, because Rome had every reason not to preserve anything and preserved it anyway. And the destruction was a decision made in Rome, on Roman grounds, about a city that had done nothing in 149 to warrant it. Nasica was right on the merits and lost. Nothing in this study softens that, and nothing in it should.

Then decline the inference, on three grounds.

On the sources. It is true that the archive burned and that almost every witness is hostile. But the load-bearing facts here are not the hostile characterisations — they are the things hostile witnesses let slip against their own interest, and the things the Carthaginians wrote themselves. Aristotle, who admired the constitution, is the source for the offices being bought and for the panacea of enriching the poor by posting them onto subject towns. Livy, sympathetic to Hannibal and hostile to the Carthaginian oligarchy, is the source for the citizens paying no direct tax. Polybius, who wanted to prove Rome's superiority, supplies the detail that the largest element in Carthaginian armies was Libyan, which undercuts his own mercenary thesis. Diodorus, drawing on a Sicilian Greek tradition that loathed Carthage, supplies a piece of structural analysis about why Carthaginian generals turned tyrant that no propagandist would have troubled to invent. And the Carthaginians themselves supply the votive formula, the sacrificial tariff with its penalty on overcharging priests, and the substitution rite written into the liturgy. The picture does not require believing anybody's slander. It requires reading hostile witnesses for what they concede.

On the standard. This collection does not grade orders against their neighbours and does not moralise about eras. It describes arrangements, and the description does not change with the comparison. Whether Carthage was better than Rome is a real question and a different one. But two of the specifics will not dissolve into "everyone

did it": a quarter of the harvest in an ordinary year and half in a bad one is at the top of anything measurable in the ancient Mediterranean, and four centuries without admitting a single subject community is an outlier in a world where Rome, Athens, Macedon and the Hellenistic kingdoms all admitted somebody. Those are not the era's common practice. They are this order's distinguishing features.

And on the substance, which is the answer that matters. **The humane Carthage of the defence and the extractive Carthage of this study are not two Carthages. They are one object seen from two ends, and the two ends are causally joined.**

The cistern under an ordinary citizen's house and the quarter of a Libyan's harvest are the same fact. The citizen paid no direct tax because Libyans and Iberians and subject cities paid instead — Livy says so in the sentence that gave Module 6 its title. The poor citizen's road to property was a posting to a dependency, which Aristotle names as the state's panacea in the same breath as he calls the constitution oligarchic. There was no garrison inside Carthage because everyone inside the walls was a shareholder in what was done outside them. The assembly's liberty was affordable precisely because every man in it was a beneficiary; a franchise costs nothing when the enfranchised all want the same thing. Even the absence of internal massacre follows, and this is the hardest part of it: an order that has externalised its costs completely has remarkably little left to fight about at home.

That is not a charge against Carthage in particular. It is the finding of the whole collection, and Carthage is its clearest single demonstration, which is why it belongs here rather than in spite of it. **The internal decency of a settlement is frequently a function of how completely it has externalised its costs** — and reading the decency without the externalisation is exactly the error this project exists to correct. A visitor walking the Byrsa in 200, past the shop-fronts and the cisterns and the stelae, into an assembly where a poor man was contradicting a magistrate, would have been seeing the truth. He would also have been standing at one end of an arrangement whose other end was forty miles inland and had never been shown to him, and which he had no occasion to think about, and which paid for the street he was walking on.

And then the cost that the achievement did not offset, stated without taking back the achievement.

Carthage was destroyed by a vote in Rome and could not have prevented it. But the reason it could not *survive* it — the reason it fought its last war with hired soldiers, a countryside that had already risen twice, a client king in the enemy's line, an oldest ally gone over before the first landing, and not one reserve of men who believed the city was theirs — was the arrangement itself. Not a flaw in it. The arrangement working as built, by sensible men, one reasonable decision at a time: buy the specialists rather than

raise citizens who will have to be paid in standing; conscript the subjects rather than form them, because forming them means admitting them; seat your own poor on the provinces rather than widen the settlement at home; and when the treasury is empty and the countryside has risen, take Spain instead of taking counsel.

Every one of those was the cheaper answer in the year it was chosen. Together they produced an order that was, for six hundred years, unusually stable, unusually free at its centre, unusually comfortable, and unusually cheap — and that had, on the one day it needed them, no reserve of men who owed it anything. It had never needed them. That was the whole design, and it worked until it was asked a question it had spent six centuries arranging never to be asked.

Legibility is not pardon and it is not condemnation either. There is no moral here about Carthaginians, who were neither better nor worse than the people who destroyed them and who left behind, in the manual Rome could not bring itself to burn, better evidence of their competence than any of their enemies' abuse. There is only the arithmetic of a position, worked by men who were solving the problem in front of them — the same arithmetic that would have produced the same answers for anybody standing where they stood, and that produced, at the end, a great city defended to the last street by people it had never once needed, and fifty thousand of them sold in a morning by an army raised from farmers who had been let in.

A note on sources. The exact quotations in this module are public-domain primary material previously established in this study and are given with their originals rather than re-argued: Polybius on the multitude at Carthage having acquired the chief voice, from Evelyn Shuckburgh's translation of *Histories* 6.51; and Livy on the twelve Latin colonies declaring they had no means to furnish men or money, from the Rev. Canon Roberts translation of 27.9. Livy's account of the Latin colonies' reasoning — ten years of levies, the men of Cannae still under arms, the fear of depopulation — is reported from the same passage; his statement that the remaining eighteen reaffirmed their obligations, and the fact that no Latin colony defected to Hannibal during the war, follow Livy and the standard modern reconstructions. The defections of Capua, Tarentum and Arpi after Cannae, and the rising of the Sicilian Greek cities, follow Livy and Polybius. The characterisation of the reinforcements sent from Carthage to Hannibal in Italy as negligible reflects the ancient accounts and the modern consensus; the specific figures given in some modern retellings are not securely attested and none is quoted here. Aristotle on the assembly, the purchase of offices, and the panacea is from Jowett's *Politics* 2.11; Livy on the absence of direct taxation of citizens from 33.47; Polybius on the composition of the mutinous army of 241 from 1.67; Diodorus on why Carthaginian generals deserted or attempted tyranny from 20.10; the sacrificial

tariff from KAI 69 / CIS I 165. The Marsala wreck and its marked, standardised components follow the published excavation of the Punic ship found off Sicily in 1971 and are paraphrased. Varro's and Columella's estimates of Mago, and the Senate's commission to Decimus Junius Silanus, follow the standard accounts. The Byrsa residential quarter and the excavators' judgement that it belonged to ordinary merchants and officials rather than to the elite follow Serge Lancel's reports. Scipio Nasica's opposition to the destruction follows Plutarch and the standard accounts. Every claim in the counter-position stated above is drawn from the same body of evidence used in the rest of this study, and is stated there in the strongest form the sources will bear, deliberately.